Charlton SPOTLIGHT

TOM SUTTON TRIBUTE

Exploring the History of the Charlton Comics Group

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remembering

TOM SUTTON

WITH MEMOIRS COMMENTARY & ARTWORK BY

Nicola Cuti
Steve Skeates
Bill Pearson
Jim Amash
Bhob Stewart
Stefan Petrucha
Mark Burbey
Steve Fiorilla
Batton Lash
& Tom Sutton

INTERVIEWS WITH

JOSE DELBO
HENRY SCARPELLI

SPOTLIGHTS ON

PETE MORISI
JACK KELLER
GRASS GREEN

THE MAGAZINE FOR CHARLTON COMICS FANS!

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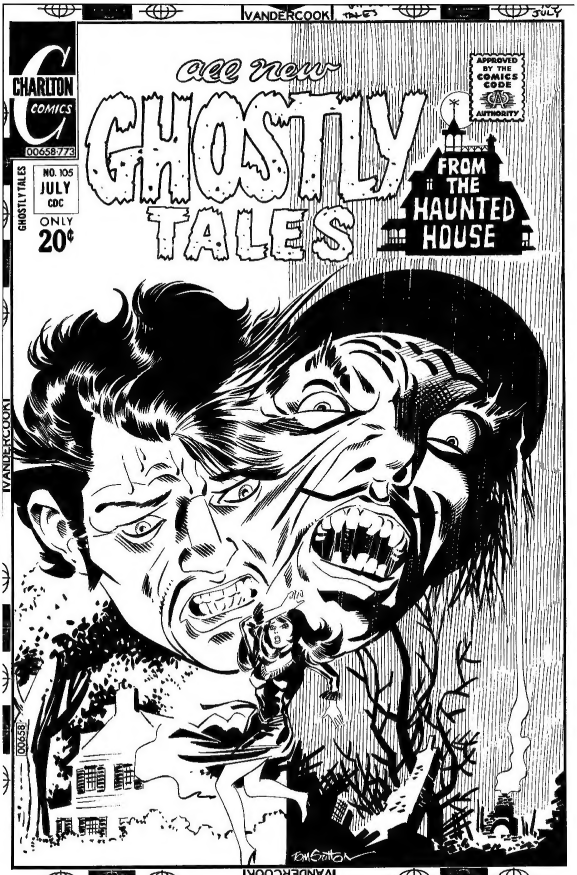

TOM SUTTON: Ghostly Tales #105, July 1973. From a copy of the original art, courtesy of Bill Pearson. © Charlton Comics Group.

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Front cover: Tom Sutton's big beastie from ***Ghostly Tales*** #106; photo by J. Shelby Gragg

Back cover: ***The Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves*** #50 by Tom Sutton

Charlton SPOTLIGHT

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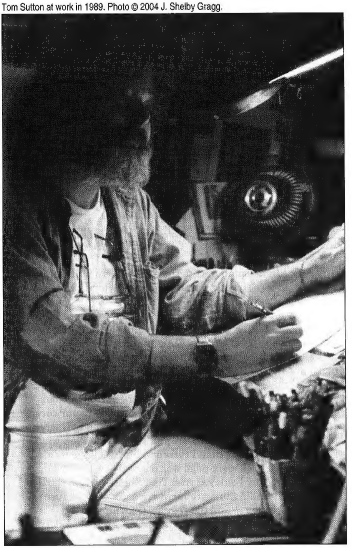
Tom Sutton at work in 1989. Photo © 2004 J. Shelby Gragg.



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the one & only TOM SUTTON

LEGENDARY COMICS ARTIST-WRITER TOM SUTTON died on May 1, 2002. Details are still uncertain, but Tom probably suffered a heart attack and was found in his apartment, reportedly at his drawing board.

I learned of Tom's death as I was wrapping up the second issue of this magazine for press. At once I started making plans for a Sutton tribute, sending out the call for contributions from those who'd known or worked with him. Over the next year the memoirs, letters, phone calls, art, and photos came rolling in, and I began to get a better idea of the enormous respect Tom had earned from his peers and fans during his long career. This issue of *Charlton Spotlight*, then, is largely a tribute to the life and work of Tom Sutton.

We want to look at as much of Tom's art as we can, because he was a giant of pictorial storytelling. But we also want to learn about the man behind the pictures. There is enough room only to outline his biography (for fuller details, see the resources on page 45). Briefly: Tom Sutton was born April 15, 1937, in North Adams, Massachusetts, and grew up there. Like many other cartoonists, Tom turned to drawing as an escape from a world that was not as interesting as those he discovered in books, movies, comic strips, and comic books. Early influences included Milton Caniff, Alex Raymond, and Hal Foster. By Tom's own admission, the classic E.C. horror and science fiction comics of the 1950s had a profound effect on the budding comics artist: Wally Wood, in particular, remained one of Tom's personal comics gods.

Tom at the board in 1989. Photo © 2004 J. Shelby Gragg.

After high school graduation in 1955, Tom enlisted in the Air Force and saw tours in Wyoming and Japan, eventually being assigned to the Tokyo offices of the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper. Tom made his first forays into sequential art there, creating and producing adventure strips *F.E.A.F. Dragon* and *Johnny Craig*. Tom was discharged in 1959 and returned to Massachusetts to win a scholarship to the School at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where he advanced life drawing and painting skills and gained exposure to the larger fine arts world. He was a freelance commercial artist during this period and was animation art director for an industrial education firm. Tom married in the early 1960s and fathered two sons.

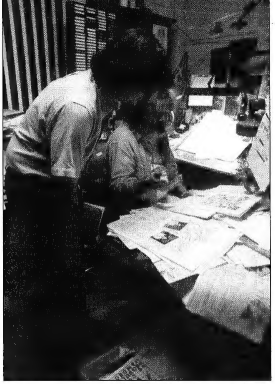
In 1967 Tom rediscovered comic books and broke into the field with a story intended for Warren's *Famous Monsters of Filmland* (diverted to an issue of *Eerie*), beginning a long and fruitful association that would result in classic stories and covers for *Creepy*, *Eerie*, and *Vampirella* magazines. At the same time Tom began working for Marvel comics, drawing backup western stories for *Kid Colt, Outlaw* and humor strips for *Not Brand Echh!*. His accounts grew to include DC, Skywald, Atlas/Seaboard, and Topps.

The mid-1970s saw the Charlton Comics Group's last and best flourishing, the apex of its long struggle from obscure, small-time beginnings in the 1940s to industry third-tier leader of the 1960s. It was a time of exciting new creative leadership of the neglected comics line under executive editor George Wildman and managing editor Nicola Cuti, spawning the company's first new superhero characters in years and its highest annual total of published issues since the 1950s. Stagnation gave way to fresh growth, due in no small part to the arrival of Tom Sutton.

Tom's irreverent contribution to John Carbonaro's **Phase #1**, 1971. © 1971, 2004 Estate of Tom Sutton.

We don't know how Tom first made contact with the Derby outfit, but his earliest identifiable Charlton story is "One Man Air Force!" in *Attack* #9 (Dec. 1972). Tom showed equal facility with war and fantasy material and would eventually come to dominate the pages of *Ghostly Tales*, *Fightin' Marines*, and other genre titles. His highly individualistic style and approach put him in the company of fellow innovators Steve Ditko, Pat Boyette, and Joe Staton. Tom painted some of Charlton's most memorably horrific covers during his four-year Charlton hitch (examples of which we offer in our cover gallery). He enjoyed the latitude Charlton offered to freely interpret scripts and to paint covers. "It was what you wanted to do!" he said the first time I talked to him. "George would call up: 'Tom, I need a six-page weird story'—he called 'em 'weird stories'—'by Friday.'" And Tom would do it, in the late hours after attending to more lucrative accounts, because of the artistic freedom—and the regular Charlton checks.

The lack of editorial interference was attractive, and Tom



Stefan Petrucha and Tom Sutton, 1989. Photo © 2004 J. Shelby Gragg.

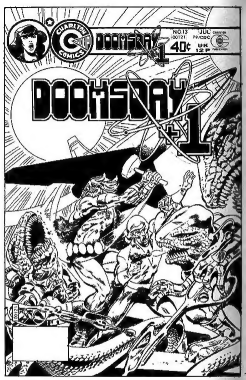
began to both write and draw his own material for Charlton, sometimes painting the cover also, occasionally producing the entire book. Memorable examples of Tom's book-length stories are "Mountain of Fear" (*Haunted* #20, Feb. 1975) and "The Devil's Lies" (*The Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves* #50, Mar. 1975). Occasional stories would be designed for black-and-white printing. A classic case is "Through a Glass Darkly" (*Ghostly Tales* #113, Feb. 1975), accompanied by one of Tom's most bizarre painted covers. He even tried his hand at two intriguing series ideas, neither of which went beyond their first appearances: The Knight (*E-Man* #1, Oct. 1973) and The Ghost Train (*Billy the Kid* #111, Feb. 1975).

Along the way, Tom drew the cover for the *Comic Book Guide for the Artist • Writer • Letterer*, a small pamphlet produced as a subscription premium. Nick Cuti was the mastermind behind this still-useful little item, whose tongue-in-cheek cover gives us much insight into how much fun Tom seemed to be having with his Charlton stories in those days. But he was never under any illusion that this work would make him rich. "There were so many different people, so many different styles, so many different, shall we say, degrees of ability demonstrated in those magazines, it was really fascinating in its own weird way," Tom said. "They were one of the cheapest outfits I ever worked for."

All that came to an end with Charlton's implosion in 1976, when 90 percent of the comics met the chopping block. By late 1977, the line had dwindled to a couple of dozen reprint titles. With one exception, Tom did no more original work for Charlton after 1976. His stories and covers continued to be reprinted for years.

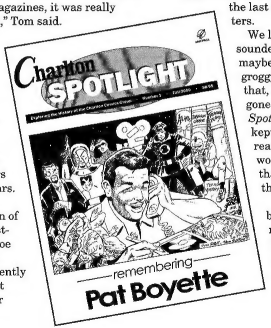
By mid-1979, Charlton had reprinted the entire six-issue run of *Doomsday+1*, the innovative post-apocalyptic SF title written by Joe Gill and drawn by a young John Byrne from 1975 to 1976. Apparently the early sales results for reprint issues 7-12 were good enough for Wildman to consider continuing the series with new material. He commissioned Tom to write and draw a new 15-page story and cover for a brand-new issue 13. As reported in *The Comic Reader* #166, Mar. 1979, however, by the time later sales figures were in, Charlton executives had changed their minds and canceled the series, leaving the new material in limbo.

Tom Sutton moved on. Over the next twenty years he had work in Marvel's *Planet of the Apes* and *Doctor Strange* and a long run on DC's *Star Trek*. He did odd series for the new publishers that cropped up in the 1980s, such as his work with Stefan Petrucha on *Squalor* for First Comics. By the mid-1990s Tom had embarked on the final phase of his career, creating erotic books for Fantagraphics' Eros comics line.



The aborted **Doomsday+1** #13. © Charlton Comics Group.

In early 2000, while assembling *Charlton Spotlight* #1, I called Tom to talk about Pat Boyette. That first conversation lasted almost two hours. I asked Tom if he would draw a cover for the first issue, and he readily agreed. I sent off a package of reference materials, and in short order Tom delivered a delightful, personalized depiction of Pat at the drawing board, characteristically talking on the phone while wielding a pencil, surrounded by some of the icons of his cartooning, film, and historical interests. For all I know, this may have been the last time Tom drew any of the Charlton characters.



We last talked in mid-February 2002. Tom sounded a little tired; maybe he was run-down, maybe he'd just gotten up from a nap and was still groggy. Or maybe my memory is colored by the fact that, barely three months later, Tom would be gone. During those months I was busy producing *Spotlight* #2. I kept meaning to call Tom and I kept putting it off. I was eager to hear his reaction to the new issue. Just days before I would deliver it to the printer, I got the news that he had died. Bill Pearson may have been the last person to talk to Tom.

Tom's Charlton work is now decades old, but there are still a great many of us who've never forgotten it. I thank the many contributors for their help in creating this tribute, and I invite you now to turn the page and join our celebration of the one and only Tom Sutton.

—Michael Ambrose

Tom Sutton Speaks

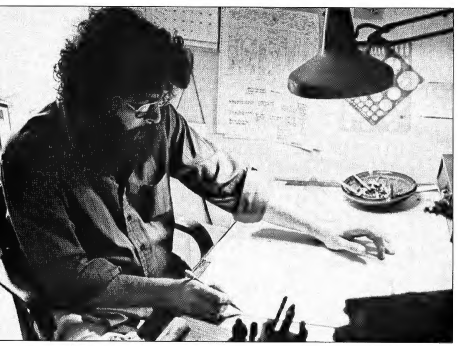
interview conducted by Mark Burbey

TOM SUTTON was one of the most talented and original comic book artists ever to set pen to paper, and his passing in April 2002 gives us an opportunity to celebrate his unique gifts.

Tom had many fans, but he was never what one would call a "fan favorite." His art was not as seductively macabre as Bernie Wrightson's or as bombastically bold as Jack Kirby's, and it certainly wasn't imbued with whatever it is that draws fans to the Todd McFarlane/Jim Lee generation of artists. Instead, Sutton's art had an organic dynamism more closely aligned with Ivan Albright, famous for painting the decaying picture of Dorian Gray for the MGM film of the same title. The depth of detail in Sutton's work drew the reader into a strange world beneath the surface of the page, and he understood the language of comics as well as Will Eisner or any number of great artists beside whom he has earned a place in comic book history.

In the winter of his career, Sutton's art retained the vitality of his earlier work. Unfortunately, not a single comic book publisher saw fit to employ Tom Sutton to do what he did best. At the end, it was Sutton's work as "Dementia" for Eros Comix that kept him occupied and fed. Any editor with an ounce of imagination or insight, however, would have cut Tom loose on an adaptation of an H.P. Lovecraft novel, a project he would have embraced and turned into his magnum opus. In truth, he wasn't treated much better during the prime of his career, put to work on everything from inking Paul Gulacy (whose work he never liked) to churning out *Star Trek* adventures. Tom produced some brilliant work for Marvel, including "Future History Chronicles" in *Planet of the Apes* magazine, Man-Thing in *Marvel Premiere*, and various stories in *Vampire Tales* magazine. But it was primarily when he worked for Warren Publications (*Creepy*, *Eerie*, and *Vampirella*) and Charlton that Sutton's genius truly shined. Sutton did some great western, war, and humor stories, but his gift was in creating palpable environs of flesh-crawling horror.

Some have questioned why Sutton worked for Charlton, particularly with that company's fabled low wages, but he did it for the same reason that Steve Ditko and many others did: Charlton allowed him the freedom to do what he wanted. If inspired, he could turn out a six-page ghost tale over a weekend and send it to Charlton with the knowledge that it would be published and he would be paid. No pressure and few limitations. Just pure artistic freedom. It might not have always resulted in award-winning work, but very often Tom would be awash in ideas and inspiration and a mere six-pager for Charlton would become an atmospheric masterwork of horror. He was also allowed to do painted covers for Charlton, something few other publishers used. So if you wonder why anyone would work for such little pay, think about it from the artist's point of view. DC and Marvel Comics paid Tom to draw what they told him to draw. Charlton Comics paid Tom for what he *wanted* to draw.



Tom Sutton during the time of his classic Charlton work. This photo accompanied Mark's original interview with Tom in **The Rocket's Blast–Comicollector** #135, Apr. 1977, and appeared earlier in **Cartoonist PROfiles** #24, Dec. 1974. Photographer unknown; © the respective copyright holder.

I came to know Tom Sutton in the late '70s after writing to him for advice about breaking into Charlton as a writer. He was very forthcoming with his suggestions, and even though I never made it into the pages of a Charlton comic book, something much more significant resulted: I forged a relationship that only his death brought to an end. I began to buy original art from Tom, and by 1978 I had published his portfolio of limited-edition prints based on H.P. Lovecraft's *Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, a novel he'd long wanted to adapt to comics. I'd hoped it would be the first of many such publishing ventures, but publishing is a business and my business acumen in 1978 was in short supply. Still, the portfolio broke even and remains a sought-after item today. Over the years, I continued to enjoy his work as well as the occasional phone call. I spoke with Tom

only a few months before his death, and he remained as opinionated and as fervent a supporter of the comics medium as he'd been in his youth.

This interview was conducted through the mail in 1977 and published in *The Rocket's Blast–Comicollector (RBCC)* #135, April 1977. With another 25 years of writing experience under my belt, I've taken this opportunity to copyedit a few of the questions for clarity, leaving their intent intact. I've also altered the sequence slightly and deleted a couple of redundant questions. Not a word of Tom's answers has been changed.

When this interview was conducted, Charlton had announced it was canceling all of its comic titles, so the nature of the questions and answers presumed that Charlton was down for the count. Charlton later announced that it would resume publishing but with fewer titles. There are a lot of questions I wished I'd asked, but beyond anything else, this interview reveals an artist who, despite his cynicism about the industry, loved the medium of comics till the end.

—*Mark Burbey, 2003*

Tom's downright chilling cover to **Ghost Manor** #23, May 1975. © Charlton Comics Group.

Mark Burbey: *To start with, a lot of fans are very curious about what happened at Charlton. What happens to artists like you, Wayne Howard, and the remaining staffers now that the company has folded? What are the possibilities of doing similar work for DC's horror books?*

Tom Sutton: Things with Charlton went from bad to worse, but why they finally quit completely, I don't know. I was hoping they would continue as the last outlet for weird story material, excepting Jim Warren, of course. Naturally, everybody was upset by it, artists looking for work everywhere. [Joe] Staton was working for Marvel and had quit Charlton before the end came, and Nick Cuti had gone to Warren months before. Wayne Howard was the only other artist I knew anything about down there and he has work from other sources.

As far as doing weird material for DC, they are overloaded according to [Joe] Orlando. They have a vast inventory. I cried, that weird stuff was my favorite work. I used to love to draw out six-to-seven page yarns, pencil them out rough, shuffle the panels around and finally write the finished dialogue to the finished pencils for Charlton.

Only when Nick was around could I get anything back. Despite the reputation Charlton earned, I liked some of my stuff done for them better than anything; I guess it must have been the freedom. There was a time when you could do a six or seven or even ten-pager right off the top of your head, just do it and send it in and get the check. That was fun and usually allowed for a freedom of working, an attitude quite different from other jobs. Naturally, there were many, many times when scripts would arrive that should have gone right down the toilet, but you drew them anyway; you needed the bread.

If I would defend Charlton for nothing else, it would be for just being there. The idea of having just TWO companies to work for is a terrible hang-up; very bad for the artist and the fan-reader. It is a bad thing to have just two companies, no matter how good either one is. It just is not healthy.

Mark: *What assignments are you currently working on to make up for work you would have been doing for Charlton?*

Tom: Of the moment, I'm not working on any comic book assignments. I have a couple of small advertising accounts that keep things going.

Oh yeah, there is an inking job or two to do for Marvel.

Mark: *Now that Charlton has folded, perhaps you can talk a bit more freely about your personal feelings toward the company. Despite receiving many scripts that "should have gone down the toilet," you produced a lot of excellent work for Charlton.* Ghost Manor *#23, for example, had a great cover based on a story inside called "Terrible Teddy."*

Tom: I like to think the more interesting stories that I did for Charlton were the ones I wrote myself. Once in a while, something else would come along that I could get into visually. "Teddy" was a cover I painted when they first started using

painted covers. After the thing was painted, I had the idea for the story, drew the story, then wrote the script or dialogue. I really like working that way.

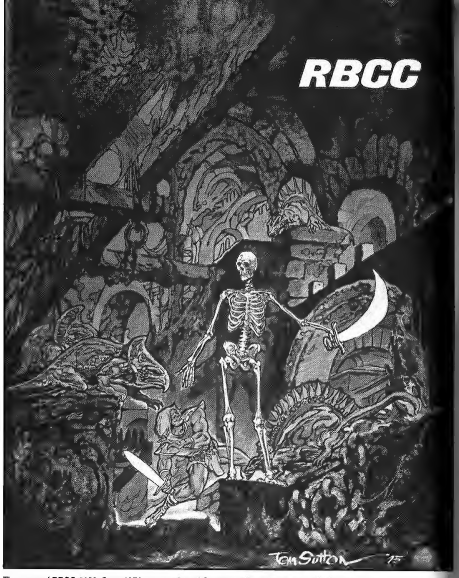
Mark: *When you receive a rather banal script to illustrate, whether it's from Charlton or another publisher, do you tend to put off doing it, or do you hack it out as quickly possible, just to be rid of it?*

Tom: I do both, unfortunately. Some really crumby shit gets lost in the back of my shelf. Some of it's still there . . . the publisher forgot about it.

Now's the time to mention a situation that may go unnoticed. Sometimes even the worst script contains an idea, suggests a mood the artist is very receptive to. Riding that idea, one can draw away, creating something apart from the script, something only conditionally linked to the words. I've had the experience of getting to a point on the second page where I really don't give a damn what the wretched script dictates, and instead, I'll follow what the *main idea* of the story *demands*. Often, the writer can't visualize worth a damn, then the artist has to take control of the strip, really take it over, editing it as you go along. When you know you're going to come to grief, get the whole thing back to redraw following the inane script directions, well . . . that's when you lose the damn thing.

Mark: *We've determined that the painting of yours that appeared on the cover of* RBCC *#130 was originally done as a Charlton cover. If so, why did Charlton reject it?*

Tom: Yes, it was an unused Charlton cover. I used to paint three or four at a time and submit them. Usually they accepted them all, but the one you speak of they didn't like. I guess it didn't have a girl being threatened by a B.E.M. or maybe they knew they could NEVER get that one in register!



The cover of **RBCC** #130, Sept. 1976, was a rejected Charlton painted cover, according to Tom. The cavernous background is a strong magenta. © 2004 Estate of Tom Sutton.

Mark: *In another interview you said that, as a child, you were extremely interested in comics. Then, when asked how you first got into drawing for comics, you replied that it was a friend who first planted the idea in your head. Why didn't the relationship between comics and art naturally mesh in your mind?*

Tom: As a kid I was heavily into E.C. and almost nothing else. I worshiped the E.C. sci-fi comics, the greatest ever. I worshiped Wally Wood, I copied him . . . hell, I traced him! His space ships, his fantastic little hollowed out panels—incredible magic! Later, I got into the horror books, but never anything like I was into the fantastic sci-fi stuff. The other interview was all wrong; misunderstood or something. I still get up in the morning and hear my head say, "Wow! Today we get to draw some comics!"

Mark: *One can often see the influence of other artists showing through in your work—Gil Kane, for example—but it seems to occur more out of fun than necessity. True?*

Tom: Sure I imitate Gil Kane. I used to imitate Wood, sometimes Kubert, and every time I like to think something rubbed off on me. Comics have been my school, the artists and writers my teachers and I'm learning slowly every day; will go on learning something new right up till the last panel . . . ggurrgle—Kroak!

Mark: *When Jim Warren forbade his artists from contributing to what he called "copy-cat horror mags," you began drawing under the pseudonym "Seane Todd." One significant strip you produced over this period was "RAT." Did you also write that story? Was it intended for* Web of Horror*? Did you have hopes, as many fans did, that* Web of Horror *would be a place for higher quality horror stories?*

Tom: Sean and Todd are the names of my sons. Yes, I wrote "RAT"; wrote three or four stories I think. "RAT" was for *Web of Horror* and returned to me when the mag died. No, I never thought of it as a place for higher quality stuff. It was just another good, healthy alternative book. We do desperately need more and different publishers!

Mark: *You've done western, war, sci-fi, horror, and some superhero work, but which genre do you enjoy drawing most? As one of your most ardent fans, I feel your best work has been in the horror field. A story called "No Fair," published in* Creepy *#22, is a personal favorite.*

Tom: "No Fair" is so long past I can only say I was still hung up on Woody's style or something like it, and it was all wrong for me. I know what you like about it, but I guess I no longer look for that kind of thing in my work. Yes, by all means, give me a weird story, a grotesque fantasy as far out as possible . . . to hell with relevant reality.

Mark: *Your volume of work for Jim Warren seems to have diminished over the past few years. Despite the influx of foreign artists, many American artists continue to appear in his magazines. Why not you?*

Tom: I asked myself that very question just the other night. I will send Jim some script idea I'd like to work up. I will try to convince him to let me do the whole thing myself. I'd like that. What I don't like is getting into a situation where I'm obliged to draw decapitations detailed in neon-lit airport lobbies, or mass killers peering through telescopic sights atop marvelously detailed modern Manhattan superhero structures. I gotta have bogs, slogs, gogs, blobs, murky mire, foggy moors, gnarled roots in rotted crypts, fetid tarn on a toasted troll!

Mark: *How do you feel about the foreign artists who have come to dominate the pages of Warren's magazines? Many of the fans in my circle are of the opinion that the foreign artists are nothing more than fashion-design artists, and as comic artists are hacks in the strictest sense of the word.*

Tom: Some of the foreign artists are common run-of-the-mill commercial laborers, 'tis true. We have a surplus of that type in the business already and do not need to import more. There are a couple of the guys from overseas appearing in (or who once appeared in) the Warren books that bring new ideas with them, contribute something different and exciting to the business. Jose Bea comes to mind as a consistent purveyor of neat stuff of a novel nature.

Mark: *Throughout your considerable body of work, you have successfully utilized many different styles. In* Creepy *#64, however, you wrote and drew a strip called "One Autumn At Arkham." I liked the story, but I felt the art was too similar to that of the foreign artists, in that it was cluttered and every panel spilled into the next. In retrospect, how do you feel about this particular story?*

Tom: You're right, the Arkham story was confused with attempts to imitate some surface effects the foreign artists were using. I guess I'm just not a stylist, or have yet to arrive at a style that sticks with me. I just think about the story and start drawing.

Mark: *You did covers and stories for Charlton's war title,* Attack #*'s 9 and 10. "One Man Air Force" in* Attack #*9 was particularly excellent, equaling anything published in E.C.'s classic war comics. Where do these stories fit into your passion for the weird and the eerie?*

Tom: Another Charlton story that never got finished, let alone into print, was called "Wolf"; a WW II Focke Wolf pilot who is a werewolf prowling the night skies, he can't come down . . . like the Flying Dutchman legend by the light of the sillvverrryyy moonnn . . .

I like to draw airplanes. Sometimes I can get off on a good plane story; engines thundering, props whining, screaming, big bad ol' B-17E's or Avro Lancasters droning through the black sky, these are Monsters . . . great hulking oil stinking grease grimed freezing wind shrieking death carrying clumsy awesome Godawful machines.

Maybe it comes from my early Air Force duty, but really more from just loving the look and feel and sound of the big old bombers. Also wayyy back, the ROMANCE of the WW I Escadrille biplanes (saw *The Blue Max* eighteen times!) . . . only trouble is the airplane drawing does get tedious . . . gets boring after a bit . . . without poetics, without a really good story of a weird nature, they are nothing.

Did a war strip for Archie Goodwin when he was editing at DC about the great Zeppelin L-19 that really was destined to bomb North America in the First World War. Don't ask what book or what year . . . about five years ago.

Of course I have all the E.C. air war books. How [George] Evans loved that stuff and how it SHOWED! It always shows when you're really getting feedback from the stuff you are doing, when you're really into it, when you can feel it . . . when you're right there inside the little panel sweating with the hero, twisting the stick, kicking the rudder pedals, ether blowing back in your face.

It's too bad these things are only used in so-called "WAR" books. I hate the business . . . "Shoot 'em in the guts rat-tat-tat-tat! Really hate to do that but war is hell. Now let's get us another gook! Heh, heh!" Oh well . . .

Mark: *How often, if ever, do you work from photographs or research a style of architecture or mode of dress when doing a period piece?*

Tom: I happen to love to research. I have tons of scrap on almost anything. I get so involved with background and atmosphere the characters come out entirely secondary. Of course, in a weird story, that's exactly the way things should be. Yes, I use swipes of all kinds. I collect notebooks full of stuff I want to put into stories . . . maybe that's why the panels get so damned cluttered!

Mark: *In Charlton's* Ghostly Tales *#107, you did a story called "The Anywhere Machine," where you worked from layouts by Wally Wood. How did that teaming come about?*

Tom: Woody did the pencils for a story I think Nick Cuti wrote when he was assistant editor at Charlton. Who knows WHY he did it; it certainly wasn't for the money. I guess he just felt like doing another six-page space story. Anyway, he got a friend of his from the old days to ink the

ONE MAN AIR FORCE!!
ON DEC 7, 1941 THE JAPANESE ATTACKED PEARL HARBOR... AND ON DEC. 8 THE JAPANESE BOMBERS BOMBARDED OUR CLARK FIELD NEAR MANILA IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS AND CAUGHT MOST OF THE U.S. AIR CORPS PLANES ON THE GROUND! CAPT. JAMES CORDAS, ONE OF THE FEW PILOTS THE OTHERS REFUSE TO TAKE A TIME HAS RUN OUT FOR THEM--OR AN HOUR BEFORE THE ATTACK...
COME ON, GUYS! WE'VE GOTTA TAKE OFF TO SAVE OUR BUTT!
MANILA HAS BEEN ATTACKED!
SCRAM! THE JAPS AREN'T HIT LEVITE YET!
FRISCO
BOMBS!
SCRAM!
Splash page from "One Man Air Force!" from **Attack** #9, Dec. 1972.
© Charlton Comics Group.

thing and it was a mess, probably because the guy, who shall remain unnamed, had spent such a long time out of comics, he'd just lost his bag of comics tricks. Nick sent me the pages and asked me to do it over. You could see Woody's strong neat figures and compositions through the mish-mash of inept inking, so I simply reworked Woody's drawings, penciling them all over again onto new page-paper and inking the stuff in as clean a line as I could manage, though my way of inking is really not suitable for Wood either. Only Woody can really ink Woody. It was a bit of a treat at the time, and of course brought back into focus all the hero worship and stuff. [***Ed. note:*** *See this issue's* Charlton Classic Reprint, *beginning on page 16!*]

Mark: *It seemed to me that as a publisher of genre comics, Charlton was ideally situated to carry the E.C. torch. Why do you think this never happened?*

Tom: Charlton could never have become anything like E.C. because Charlton didn't give a shit! They just didn't care. They were simply filling pages. One or two guys I knew did care, and they would get very upset, bitter, and it really wore them down. Usually, I liked it . . . maybe I'm perverse. I liked the idea they would call and say do six pages of ghostly stuff, anything you want. It was very relaxing from the other work. Again, a couple of good things came out of it, too bad nobody will ever see them, especially me!

Mark: *How did you feel about the "Frankenstein" stories you did for Skywald's black-and-white horror magazine* Psycho? *Though written by you under your Seane Todd pseudonym, these stories seemed even more rushed than some of your Charlton stories.*

Tom: "Frankenstein" was soooo looonnngg ago! I vaguely remember it as a hurry-up job. I wish now I'd had the time to do it right. I hardly knew what I was doing in those days. I hardly ever put enough time in on penciling, hoping to cover up my blunders with ink. It never worked. Now everything takes me so much longer than it ever did before; I draw things over and over. I've discovered that's the way it works for me. I never seem to get it right the first time. I am seldom happy with anything when it's finished. There never seems to be enough time to do it the way I want. I keep wanting to go back and do it all over. Not until the end, when it's time to rush it to the post office, do I see where it could have been so much better. I'm cursed.

This illustration from **RBCC** #132, a special Adam Strange issue, was another rejected Charlton painted cover, according to Mark, who once owned the original art. Mark says the figures of Adam and Alanna were drawn later and pasted onto the painting, perhaps with an eye toward use in a DC project that never came together. Photo of the original painting courtesy of Mark. Art © 2004 Estate of Tom Sutton. Characters TM & © 2004 DC Comics.

Mark: *In 1976, Byron Preiss convinced Pyramid Books to publish a series of paperback comic books called* Fiction Illustrated. *The first issue, written by Preiss and illustrated by you, featured a character named Schlomo Raven. Were you satisfied with the final product?*

Tom: Both Byron and I loved Schlomo. We would run up absurd phone bills betwixt New York and Dunwich talking it out. Byron's enthusiasm is contagious and we both liked the idea of sneaking comics off the all-too-few comic book racks across to the paperback book rack. Byron made up very tight layouts for the

whole book. Sometimes I got confused (it's not hard to confuse me) and the second story especially suffered from confusion.

Would it be okay if we tried again?

Mark: *Why is it that you've never branched out, as many comic artists have, and done paperback covers, movie posters and the like? Neal Adams and Bernie Wrightson are doing this, and Mike Kaluta has illustrated hardcover editions. You've done drawings for the* Weird Heroes *paperbacks, so why not other things?*

Tom: Why not indeed? I'd love to! Maybe I'll get the chance. I'm certainly slowly working in that direction . . . again, very slowly.

The other side of that answer is this: All three guys you mentioned I greatly admire. I have all Neal's comic books, my workroom is plastered with those gorgeous Wrightson and Kaluta posters (especially loved Kaluta's *Shadow* book). From what little I know, there is a major difference between myself and these fellows (count it as a cop out if you want, but it's real to me): Neal has a downtown studio, he has assistants, he's on the street, and knows a hell of a lot more about the business than I ever will or would want to. Bernie once said he could take a lot of time, days to do a page, because he didn't have to make a lot of bread because of his lifestyle. Well, I can't do that. I'm pressed for money all the time. I love comics, but I love my family more, and the kids gotta have shoes, baby! Besides, I could never, NEVER live in or around New York. My nervous condition doesn't allow me to be in Boston for more than a couple hours, then I'm shook up for days.

I've always felt the paperback book cover market was glutted with talent. Also, one gets into a rut; I am a house person. I have this big old falling down house, I love it (the main portion was erected in 1690 and that's one hell of a long time to hold an erection, but anyway . . .). I stay in here, in my tiny painting studio, in the workroom where the comics are drawn, surrounded by television, stereo, stacks of radio show and sci-fi soundtrack tapes, and two zillion old magazines. Then I have another room off the bedroom where I sometimes go to effect a change; this room has two more drawing tables. My wife has her workroom opposite (Charlotte runs a school for little people), and there are kids coming in and out. A lot of the time I sleep all day and work all night; these are my best times, especially in the summer, 'cause I CAN NOT STAND the stinking summer. I loathe the heat. Your hand sweats all over the paper. I'm ruining the ecology keeping giant air conditioners running.

Guess I got a little off track there, but what I'm getting at is this: I'm locked into a certain way of life with certain responsibilities that don't allow for much time to get samples ready for art directors (I was once an art director; a distinctly lower form of life!), and I just can't seem to get to see the people I should see. I would love to see more people in the business, other cartoonists, artists, etc., but since I hate to travel and my record stay at the Boston Con was one-half hour, I guess I won't get to see or know many except through the mail.

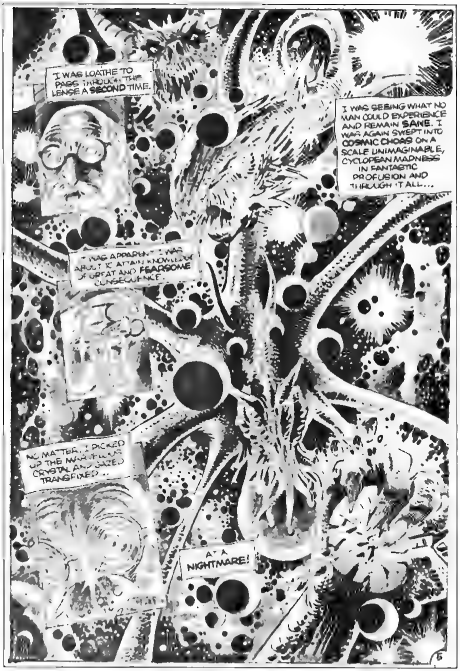
Detail from plate 2 of **H.P. Lovecraft's The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath Portollo.**
Art © 1978, 2004 Estate of Tom Sutton.

However, I am working on a few things that might appeal to fantasy people outside of comics. I'm hoping to get some exposure through the *RBCC* and similar publications.

Mark: *Would you like to do a hardcover adaptation similar to Richard Corben's adaptation of R.E. Howard's* Bloodstar*? If so, what would you be interested in adapting?*

Tom: *Bloodstar* is neat. I wish I could afford a copy. Yes, I'd like to do *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* by H.P. Lovecraft. That's where I'm at.

Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath was written during 1926 (scratched out entirely in longhand as H.P.L. loathed typewriters) and never published during his lifetime. Lovecraft died in 1937, the year I was born. This perhaps accounts for it not being on his chronological list in the back of *The Tomb* paperback, but the list does provide us with information that he wrote "The Silver Key" also in 1926. This short story introduces Randolph Carter (protagonist of *Dream-Quest* and


I WAS LOATHE TO PASS THROUGH THE LEAGE A SECOND TIME.
I WAS SEEING WHAT NO MAN COULD EXPERIENCE AND REMAIN SANE. I WAS AGAIN SWEPT INTO COSMIC CHAOS ON A SCALE UNIMAGINABLE, CYCLOPEAN MADNESS IN FANTASTIC PROFUSION AND THROUGH IT ALL...
I HAD APPARENTLY TWICE ABJUT CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE GREAT AND FEARSOME CONSEQUENCE.
NO MATTER... PICKED UP THE MAGNIFYING GLASS AND TRANSFIXED...
A NIGHTMARE!

Splash page from "Through a Glass Darkly," script and art (all originally printed in black & white) by Tom Sutton, from **Ghostly Tales** #113, Feb. 1975. © Charlton Comics Group. See page 40 for the issue's painted cover.

the key he discovered to open the doors of the inner dream world) and is followed in 1932 by "Through the Gates of the Silver Key," which, of course, relates directly to the then-unpublished *Kadath*. Carter stars in all of these. Apparently *Dream-Quest* is a first draft, a short novel, 140 pages of rambling narrative unbroken into chapters, and for some, too unstructured to hold attention easily.

If you recall "Pickman's Model," you'll be delighted to learn that the same fiendish painter from Boston's ancient North End (where I lived for four years) appears in *Dream-Quest* as a ghoul guide for Carter on his trip through the underworld.

In the early pages of "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (1931) you find H.P.L. visiting Newburyport, staying at the exotic gloomy Victorian YMCA and spending a dark night in the 18th century library next door before leaving on the bus from Market Square taking the High Road along the coast through Rowly and Ipswich to Innsmouth. I like to think I'm shadowed by H.P.L. as I go to life-drawing sessions weekly at the old YMCA and muse dreamily among the old books in the little brick library before going two blocks down the street to Market Square to the book shops and rotting wharves. I love it!

He, by the way, hated the cold and longed for your [a southern] climate. Pity is, though he might have lived longer in the South, his head would never have accepted it.

Mark: *Do you see yourself as a comic artist twenty or thirty years from now, or are there other areas of art you'd like to explore?*

Tom: I want to do more things, yes. I have a little animation project in the back of my head I'd like to carry out strictly for myself. I wish I had more time for painting.

Yet, I still have a lot of things I'd like to do in comics. I'd like to find some way to help comics change for the better.

Mark: *You've said in other interviews that you don't particularly like drawing super-heroes, yet you've inked several of them. Do you look upon inking as merely a mechanical duty, whereas drawing is the true creative process?*

Tom: Inking is an art by itself. Some see it only as tracing over the penciler's drawing like inking in a cell for animation, but it's not that at all when it's done right. Think of it as rendering. You're bringing the panel to life, adding something of your own. Think of the great engravers Doré had, the guys who are responsible for all of what most of us know about what Gustave Doré drew.

A good inker should first of all be a terrific painstaking craftsman. If he is also an artist, all the better, but of course he will never get paid for what he's worth.

Presently, the pencil drawing is much more interesting to me, though I would always prefer to finish my own work.

Mark: *Is there any one single strip or project you're especially proud of?*

Tom: I was very happy developing the "Future History Chronicles" in the *Planet of the Apes* book. I was heartbroken to see it go. There was so much that Doug [Moench] and I talked about doing with the strip. Then again, there were all those letters complaining about the complicated panels . . . I felt like I was linked into an audience of speed-readers. What the hell's their hurry?

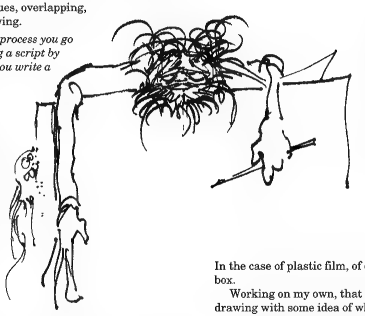
Mark: *The art on "Future History" looks totally different from anything you've previously done. We touched on this earlier, but you seem to have an endless supply of variations on the basic theme, the basic Tom Sutton style. Do you go out of your way to create these different styles, or does it just come naturally out of a desire for the pen work to look different?*

Tom: I like to use different materials. A lot of the Apes pages

were done on plastic sheets. The penciling was on three or four layers of tissue underneath, the inking-rendering done on the matte surface plastic. It allowed me to play around with the separate drawings on tissues, overlapping, composing without redrawing.

Mark: *Please describe the process you go through when approaching a script by another writer and when you write a story.*

Tom: On something I'm serious about, I will read the synopsis over a few times to get it all straight. This is when I work with someone else, like Doug. I collect scrap reference. I start to break down the story in little thumbnail sketches (did you ever sketch on yer thumbnail?). I usually draw everything on tissues first, whole pads of tissues, then I stick them together on the light table built into my drafting table, place the Strathmore drawing paper over the top and pencil it all over again tightening things as I go along.



Mark explains the origin of this drawing by Tom: "When Tom sent me the artwork for the Lovecraft portfolio, he accompanied it with a letter written on a large piece of paper . . . a VERY large piece of paper. The letter (dated Sept. 26, 1978) requested the balance of the payment promised and mentioned that he had a gallery show planned around the drawings. Tom also went on to describe how hard he'd worked on the drawings, and that after many false starts, he was finally happy with the finished pieces. Tom signed the letter 'Exhausted—Tom S.' and on the left side of the page is this self-portrait, a quick caricature of an exhausted Tom Sutton. The drawing has never been published, or even seen by anyone but me." Art © 2004 Estate of Tom Sutton.

In the case of plastic film, of course, you don't need the light box.

Working on my own, that is, without a writer, I'll just start drawing with some idea of what's going to happen in my mind, penciling away on tissues again. Combining, rearranging the tissues, slipping background tissues underneath, sometimes inking directly on the drawing paper over the tissues stuck to the light box, other times redrawing everything in pencil, rendering with extra dense india ink, brushes of all kinds, rapidograph pens (try the double zero Jewel Rapidograph. Fantastic!), croquille grease crayon, acrylic black wash, and finally striking in intense whites with white opaque.

Oh, oh . . . you asked about WRITING! Well, I rarely type anything out first. I draw the thing, pencil it complete. Then I sit down and indicate balloons on a tissue over the pencilled page and type captions and dialogue keyed to the tissue.

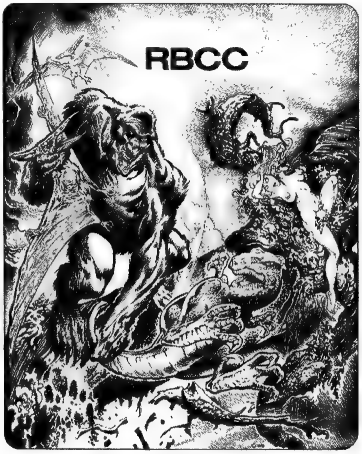
Mark: *In Mark Feldman's fanzine* I'll Be Damned, *you had a continued strip called "Pilgrim." It ran for two issues and then died along with the zine. What became of the rest of that strip, and what happened after the boy was hit by the car?*

Tom: "Pilgrim" was intended to be an epic adventure in sci-fi. The poor kid was to have been taken up to the stranded space ship, Pilgrim, his mind to replace the strayed, lost or stolen mind of the Pilgrim's host-pilot. It would be fun to work this tale out, too!

Mark: *What upcoming projects can we look forward to?*

Tom: Some obscure advertising work, a couple of paperbacks (interior illustrations), and a top secret new strip! The strip will center around a character I introduced some time back called RAT. He will be modified, changed . . . little will remain but the name.

© 2004 Mark Burbey



It's not **Planet of the Apes**, but it's an ape—a big one! Tom's energetic cover to a 1970s **RBCC** special depicts King Kong. © 2004 Estate of Tom Sutton.

Who Better?

by **Steve Skeates**

"HE HAD KILLED a man! Pumped three bullets in at close range. He was caught, brought to trial, and sentenced to death . . ." Not exactly deathless prose. Hardly something anyone would wish to analyze, delve deeply into, and quote from endlessly, but at least it's succinct. Straight to the point.

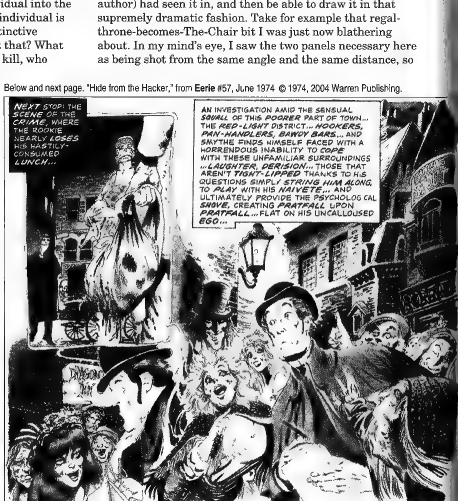
I daresay you'll agree, though, that there really isn't much of a story there. Oh sure, there's an appropriate amount of life and death issues, the sort of gritty pseudoreality that comic books love to wallow within, but where's the drama? Where's the motivation, the motive, the reason (as petty and irrational, as psychotic and quite possibly lame, as it may well be), the back story, the thoughts that ultimately led this individual into the commission of such a heinous crime? Ah yes, an individual is what he is, someone in possession of his own distinctive personality—so, as my third inquiry, what about that? What sort of a man is this who would feel compelled to kill, who would feel perhaps even justified in snuffing out the life of someone we also know so little about?

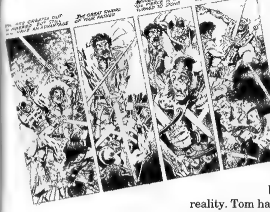
Unanswered questions? Unanswered and unanswerable? No way, man! Look again! They're there, right there, those answers, most of them—though, as I've taken pains to point out, they're certainly not to be found within those pathetically pedestrian words up there. But this (the entity I've been quoting from) is, in case you haven't guessed, a comic book story, making for (in this particular instance) drama, motivation, and personality galore spilling out like gangbusters all over your living room and your den, exuding from the three pictures that accompany those lackluster words. The anger, determination, and even a sick sort of glee etched upon the killer's face as he fires those three shots. The police investigating the crime scene, uncovering clues (enigmatic to be sure and never to be fully explained—like that partially emptied, open, fallen briefcase situated in just about the exact center of this particular panel—yet nonetheless quite definitely there) even as the killer is dragged away. And finally, in a close-up of this fiend as he hears of his sentence—not so much surprise, disappointment, and fear; rather mainly a large quantity of anger obviously still there. A nice touch, that, more than a mere hint as to the sort of individual we're dealing with here.

And there's more (in other places, other stories): the "camera" seemingly pulling back as an old lady also shrinks back, screaming with shock and horror because of what she's found in a hatbox; her hands there (another definite nice touch) dominating the picture, her fingers splayed as though she just touched something no one in his or her right mind would ever wish to touch. A bedraggled footsoldier in some future war (or "police action" as those in power had a tendency to call their wars way back when this tale was written) looking longingly, wistfully upon a beautiful woman wearing a trenchcoat, big hair, and an attitude. Or the "camera" again, this time moving in, seemingly (in fact) suddenly shooting in, as a switch is thrown and the ornate throne the aforementioned killer thinks (or dreams perhaps) that he is seated upon abruptly becomes what it really was all along: Old Sparky.

That was the thing about Tom: Almost always he would give you more than you asked for, would (to be more succinct and thereby make this more of a personal remembrance) imagine a scene in far more dramatic terms than I (as the author) had seen it in, and then be able to draw it in that supremely dramatic fashion. Take for example that regal-throne-becomes-The-Chair bit I was just now blathering about. In my mind's eye, I saw the two panels necessary here as being shot from the same angle and the same distance, so

Below and next page. "Hide from the Hacker," from **Eerie** #57, June 1974 © 1974, 2004 Warren Publishing.


NEXT STOP: THE SCENE OF THE CRIME, WHERE THE ROOKIE NEARLY LOSES HIS MARTIAL CONSUMED LUNCH...
AN INVESTIGATION AMID THE SENSUAL SQUALOR OF THIS POORER PART OF TOWN... THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT... HOOKERS, PAN-HANDLERS, BAWDY BARS... AND SMYTHE FINDS HIMSELF FACED WITH A HORRENDOUS INABILITY TO COPE WITH THESE UNFAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS ...LAUGHTER, PERVERSION... THOSE THAT AREN'T TIGHT-LIPPED THANKS TO H.S. QUESTIONS SIMPLY STRING HIM ALONG, TO PLAY WITH HIS NAIVETE... AND ULTIMATELY PROVIDE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SHOVE, CREATING A PRATFALL UPON PRATFALL... FLAT ON HIS UNCALLOUSED EGO...



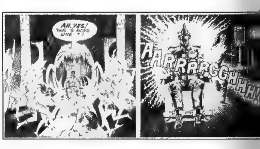
that the reader would immediately grasp that what was a dream (i.e., the killer's point of view) had, with but the flick of a switch, abruptly been replaced by reality. Tom had more faith in the readers, knew that if he shot in, the relationship between the two scenes would still be readily apparent, and of course he knew it would be far more dramatic to close in on the suddenly shock-ridden face of this condemned killer. Yes indeed, he had the entire enchilada scoped out perfectly.

There was (to boil this all down to its basic essence) so much that Tom could give to a story. Not just a nifty sense of design, a compelling command of the potentially potent in-your-face starkness of the black and white, a superlative ability to convey the disconcerting, the unsettling, the horrific, and the scary—he, unlike many another horror artist (especially those who worked for the Warren publications) also knew how to handle an action scene, a fight scene. And to say he did it well would be doing something far dopier than merely putting it mildly. Just check out that brutal fistfight between the purposely nameless hero and General Volkov in "The Beginning" (*Creepy* #47, Sept. 1972), the chase and tackle in "Hide From The Hacker" (*Eerie* #57, June 1974), the various sword fights in "Musical Chairs" (*Eerie* #43, Nov. 1972), and the Crime Crusher's dramatic foot-in-the-face entrance on page one of "The Superhero" (*Eerie* #32, Mar. 1971). These scenes (need I point out?) are personal favorites because they take place within tales I scripted, but of course a veritable slew of other fine examples abound.

And to top it off, Tom could write, too.

SO YES, OF COURSE, I was jealous of this Tom Sutton dude—especially back there in the seventies, back when the two of us were working for such Warren publications as *Creepy*, *Eerie*, and *Vampirella*. Let's call it an ego thing because that's what it was, this jealousy flowing (as jealousy usually does) out of some vastly silly, vastly overblown sense of self-importance. Writers and artists, after all (traditionally, with few exceptions, though they're often loathe to admit it, even well after the fact) possess egos approximately the size of Montana. And an outsized ego is almost always easily bruised. Furthermore, artists who write are particularly galling, especially to those of us who only do the words. First and foremost is the simple fact that, since they're drawing the story themselves, the words these artists put down on paper get just exactly the sort of art accompaniment these part-time wordsmiths want. Meantime, more often than not at Warren, I would be teamed with an artist who probably didn't speak English (and most definitely at least didn't speak it as his first language), someone who was doubtless working from a rather poorly done makeshift translation of what I'd written. Hey—I know, I know, I'm fully aware that it wasn't really these artists' fault if they missed (as they often did) a number of important story points; one can more accurately blame that on the translator. I know that now and I knew it back then, too. Yet knowing that hardly did much to vitiate what in those crazy days was my continually raging sense of disappointment. Plus—to drive home a point I've probably already sufficiently made (but one can never be sure)—if whatever story of mine I'm talking about here just happened to contain a fight scene, just about any Warren artist other than Tom would give me something that looked like bad professional wrestling, Gorgeous George stuff, all stagy and fake, rather than the good old-fashioned all-out blood-splattering fisticuffs that I of course felt this particular story (not that I know exactly which story it is I'm talking about) so richly deserved.

STRANGELY, THOUGH, all of that does not contain within its maddening egregiousness the most galling aspect. Nope, that came later, upon publication, when I finally got to see all the other stories in that anthology, the tales that surrounded my contribution. For I knew, even as I was fuming over a botched fight scene and/or various missed or messed-up story strands, that most of the regular Warren readers would be busy hardly even noticing my yarn (and no matter how bad they turn out, we writers do want our stories noticed), my effort totally overshadowed by at least one of the other pieces, a piece with power, a tale that reached out bombastically, grabbed the audience by whatever body parts were most easily accessible, and mercilessly pulled them into its rapid relentless rough-and-tumble flow. And, more often than not, this chunk of all-consuming force would be a tale drawn (and often written as well) by Tom Sutton.



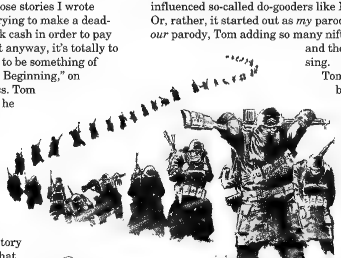
Upper left and above. "Musical Chairs," from **Eerie** #43, Nov 1972 © 1972, 2004 Warren Publishing.

The obvious solution to all of this can be found in a certain age-old axiom, the one that says, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!"—the only problem there being that we Warren writers seldom (if ever) had any control over what artists would be chosen to illustrate our stories. Had I exerted some sort of control, surely Tom (if he had been so inclined) would have drawn far more of my Warren stories—perhaps even all of them. Still, the four he did handle bestowed upon me an undying respect for this man, for his wide-ranging talents and abilities, while also bringing a smile to my face, the heady

YOU HAVE CHOSEN EVIL!
AND NOW YOU'RE GOING TO PAY!
CHOSEN TO BE IRRATIONAL!
SMASH!
IT AIN'T ENOUGH HE'S FOULIN' UP THE CAPER... HE GIVES LECTURES TOO!

Above and be ow "Superhero," from **Eerie** #32, Mar. 1971. Middle: "The Beginning," from **Creepy** #47, Sept 1972. © 1971, 1972, 2004 Warren Publishing.

feeling of being part of a team that had produced something fairly wonderful. Of these, "Musical Chairs," the very tale that provided the quote at the very top of this tribute, is quite definitely the worst written, a rush job, one of those stories I wrote nearly as fast as I could type. (Was I trying to make a deadline? Or, did I perhaps need some quick cash in order to pay the rent? I really don't remember.) But anyway, it's totally to Tom's credit that this baby turned out to be something of which I am honestly quite proud. "The Beginning," on the other hand, in many ways is a mess. Tom obviously didn't understand the story; he even drew scenes that were supposed to be happening miles apart as occurring in the same place, yet I realize in retrospect that this was mainly my own fault. What I was trying to say was way too complex for such a short story; I was attempting to cram what should have been a ten- or fifteen-page tale into a mere six pages. So, of course, certain story points got lost in the squeeze, so lost that even Tom missed them. Still, there's a lot of nifty art stuff going on in "The Beginning" that I quite like—the furthest-back flashbacks, those scenes from the hero's childhood, sporting distinctive borders that make them look quite like snapshots copped from some old family album, a perhaps even treasured record of better days, happier times, and the visual interpretation of the female lead: a striking woman possessing such an air of determination, so seemingly in control within a world which otherwise has devolved into utter chaos. As for "Hide From the Hacker" —what a delicious period feel that piece has, close to being my all-time favorite of all the silly period pieces I've ever scripted!



The best of the four, though, a tale that so appeals to my aforementioned ego that I can't help but honestly label it whenever I think about it "a true classic," came right at the beginning, the very first time Tom and I worked together. And it was the late, great Archie Goodwin (definitely the best editor James Warren ever employed) who put us together. I'm speaking of "The Superhero," so actually I can't think of any other artist Archie could have given this story to. Certainly, to my way of thinking, there's no artist who could have done a better job with it, for this particular yarn contained everything that Tom did so well—action, fight scenes, moodiness, horror, plus yet another element Tom excelled at (wow, was there anything this dude *couldn't* do??)! That additional element was humor, seeing as this was my parody of Charlton fan-favorite Steve Ditko—or more specifically, of Steve's strict violent humorless proselytizing right-wing Ayn Rand influenced so-called do-gooders like Mr. A and the Question. Or, rather, it started out as *my* parody, but it quickly became *our* parody, Tom adding so many nifty little bits to the tale and thereby really making it sing.

Tom and I met face to face but once, and unfortunately that was at a convention, while Tom was appropriately surrounded by adoring fans—a situation which afforded us little opportunity to actually talk. I did get to shake his hand, though, and thank him for the superlative job he had done on "The Superhero." And, as indicated, that was hardly hot air. I can't, of course, within this article, give you anything even resembling a proper taste of how powerful and just plain fun this tale turned out. You'll all just have to read this story for yourselves.

Yet there is one panel here that stands rather as a microcosm for the huge amount of wonderfulness that Tom added to this insanity. It's the third panel on page five, and it shows the Crime Crusher punching out one of the bad guys while simultaneously spouting off, delivering a typical Ditko-esque ultraconservative sermon. My original script had this diatribe contained within but one single balloon, but Tom very wisely broke this political speech up into no less than six separate balloons, leaving no question at all in the reader's mind that each of this protagonist's statements is puncutated by a tooth-loosening punch squarely in the baddie's face! This one panel alone is enough to make me wonder—is there any artist now working in comics who could and would put as much into a story as Tom Sutton did?

I quite sincerely doubt it.

© 2004 Steve Skeates

TOM SUTTON
MY COLLABORATOR AND FRIEND
by Nicola Cuti

I RECALL the time I picked up issue one of *Creepy* magazine. I was in high school and living in Valley Stream, Long Island. My dad and I were driving by a candy store and he asked me to stop in and pick up a few cigars for him. I got him some of those Berings in the aluminum tubes (my buddies and I used to slip CO_2 cartridges in them and turn them into rockets). The yellow cover caught my eye along with the incredible black-and-white artwork inside by Al Williamson, Joe Orlando and others, and I became a subscriber.

It was a White Stone Day* when each new issue came and I was able to drool over the inspired work by Goodwin, Morrow, Crandall, and one day a particularly moody piece concerning a group of boys exploring a haunted house. The decrepit old house against a huge white moon with the frightened youngsters sidling toward it, all rendered with great deliberate brush strokes, made me a fan of this new artist . . . Tom Sutton.

Years later, when I joined the Air Force and was bored out of my mind, walking posts as a Security Policeman, I sent in a story to *Creepy* and was astonished when it was accepted and then learned that Tom Sutton had illustrated my little saga, "Grub." **

On leave I was invited, by legendary publisher Jim Warren, to attend one of Phil Seuling's comic book conventions and it was there I met Tom. He was a huge bear of a man with a mass of curly brown hair which allowed only his eyes, cheeks and nose to peer out. And he had a laugh and booming voice that made you like him immediately. Tucked under his arm was another story I had penned, called something like "Asylum." As usual, it was brilliantly rendered in what I had begun to term Sutton grays.

Later, when I was working at Charlton as assistant editor, Tom and his wife dropped by and I became their tour guide to the wonders of Derby, Connecticut. They invited me over to their house in Massachusetts where I met Todd, one of Tom's sons, and performed a magic show, one of my hobbies. On several other visits, after Tom's divorce and before my own marriage, Tom and I used to hit the local bars and restaurants in New England in search of exciting young wenches. We even found a few.

Tom was a fast artist as well as good, rivaled only by Steve Ditko in speed. When an artist, who shall remain nameless, turned in an unprintable story, overly crosshatched, we turned to Tom to trace over the layouts and re-render the art. You see, we had already printed the cover and we needed the art in two days. Tom, of course, came through.

Over the years we kept in touch by phone. Anyone who knew Tom knows about those two-hour-long conversations, full of sound and fury. I asked him to work on an issue of my character, Captain Cosmos, and was about to call him to give him last-minute instructions, when I heard about his passing on the Charlton chat list. In disbelief, I called him anyway to hear a mechanical voice inform me: "That number has been disconnected."

Yeah, I guess so.

Cover of **Ghostly Tales** #106, Aug. 1973, from a printed copy of the original art. © Charlton Comics Group.

*Nick explains: "A White Stone Day comes from the ancient Romans who used to mark special days with white stones. When I was doing research on Lewis Carroll for an article I was writing on him, I discovered he used this expression for his exceptional days and so I dropped it into my lexicon."

**_Creepy_ #28, Aug. 1969.

© 2004 Nicola Cuti

MAN'S QUEST TO MAKE EVERY CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE AVAILABLE TO HIM HAS DRIVEN HIM TO CONSTRUCT VEHICLES OF GREAT STRENGTH AND COMPLEXITY.* IN FACT, THE ONLY PROBLEM MAN HAS NOT CONQUERED, IS THAT ONCE HE GETS TO WHERE HE WANTS TO GO, HE MAY HAVE WISHED HE'D NEVER GONE.* – COME WITH US, NOW FOR A JOURNEY ABOARD...
THE ANYWHERE MACHINE!
I DON'T LIKE THIS, BLAKE! DR. KOENIG SHOULD BE HERE HIMSELF TO PILOT THIS MACHINE FOR US! WHAT WOULD A STRANGER KNOW ABOUT THE QUEEN BEE?
RELAX, GINA! – I'M CERTAIN KOENIG WOULD PICK A COMPETENT MAN TO REPLACE HIM! LOOK, HERE HE COMES NOW!
GEORGE WILDMAN EDITOR NICK CUTI WRITER Art by JIM STERANKO From Layouts by Wally Wood! D-5153
1

CHARLTON CLASSIC REPRINT

Originally published in **Ghostly Tales** #107, Oct. 1973. © Charlton Comics Group.

HELLO! MY NAME IS "JANUS." I'LL BE YOUR TEST PILOT FOR THIS FLIGHT." - YOU TELL ME WHERE TO GO AND WE'LL BE THERE."
WHAT A DARLING MONKEY! DOES IT HAVE A NAME?
I CALL HIM "KOENIG!" HE WAS ONE OF DOCTOR KOENIG'S TEST ANIMALS SO I NAMED IT AFTER HIM!
LET'S GET ABOARD, WE HAVE A LONG FLIGHT AHEAD OF US!
"WITHIN THE CRAFT, BLAKE WATCHED JANUS CAREFULLY, AS THE PILOT WENT THROUGH HIS PRE-FLIGHT CHECKING." IN ONLY MINUTES, JANUS HAD CONVINCED BLAKE AND GINA THAT HE KNEW AS MUCH ABOUT THE QUEEN BEE, AS THEY DID."
ACCORDING TO OUR FLIGHT SCHEDULE, THE FIRST STOP IS MARS!
MARS, IT IS, DOC! DON'T EVEN BOTHER TO BRACE YOURSELF, YOU WON'T FEEL A THING!
"THE QUEEN BEE WAS NOT A SPACE SHIP, SO THERE WERE NO BLAST FLAMES BELCHING FROM ROCKET TUBES... NOR WERE THERE 'G' FORCES PRESSING DOWN ON ITS OCCUPANTS - THE CRAFT, MERELY VANISHED FROM POINT "A", AND REAPPEARED AT POINT "B"."
B
B
2

ISN'T IT INCREDIBLE?! MANKIND HAS BEEN TRYING TO REACH MARS FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS BY ROCKET — AND HERE WE ARE — USING ONLY A FRACTION OF THE EFFORT!
THANKS TO KOENIG'S "ANYWHERE MACHINE."
IT'S A SHAME HE'S NOT HERE TO SEE THIS, DOCTOR KOENIG WOULD BE THRILLED,
DON'T BOTHER COLLECTING ANY SAMPLES! OUR ONLY PURPOSE HERE IS TO CHECK OUT THE QUEEN BEE!
...BESIDES, MARS IS A DEAD WORLD!
BACK SO SOON, EH? WHERE DO WE GO NEXT?
WE'RE GOING TO EARTH'S PAST, THE MIDDLE AGES IS WHAT DOCTOR KOENIG HAD SCHEDULED.
THERE'S SOMETHING VERY SINISTER ABOUT JANUS, HE KNOWS TOO MUCH ABOUT "THE QUEEN BEE!"
HIS MONKEY IS CUTE.

JANUS - DID DOCTOR KOENIG EXPLAIN THE PRINCIPLE BEHIND THE ANYWHERE MACHINE TO YOU?
YEAH, THE MACHINE BREAKS ITSELF AND US DOWN TO ELECTRIC PARTICLES - AND THEN IT TRANSPORTS THESE PARTICLES TO WHERE-EVER I'VE PROGRAMMED IT TO GO.
YOU SEEM TO KNOW A GREAT DEAL, JANUS.
I KNOW THAT IT WILL TAKE US ANYWHERE, EVEN TO THE..
...CRUSADES!
GOOD LORD! GET US AWAY FROM HERE! IF THE SHIP IS DAMAGED, WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LEAVE!

KLUNK!
WE'RE HIT!
I'M REDUCING THE SIZE OF THE QUEEN BEE —
WHERE ARE WE NOW?
WE'RE INSIDE SOMEONE'S BLOOD STREAM,' YOU HAD BETTER MAKE THE REPAIRS QUICKLY.'
IT LOOKS LIKE WATER!
IT IS,' RED COR PUSCLES GIVE BLOOD COLOR — BUT WATCH OUT FOR THE WHITE CORPUSCLES — THEY DESTROY FOREIGN BODIES LIKE US.'
THERE,' THAT'S DONE.'
BLAKE!
5

YIIIIIII!!
THE GUN HAS NO EFFECT ON IT!
GO FOR THE DARK NUCLEUS! THAT'S IT'S BRAIN!
GOT IT!
GET INSIDE, GINA!
NICE SHOOTING, DOC! NOW I SUPPOSE WE HEAD FOR HOME.
NO - NOT YET. THERE'S ONE MORE PLACE TO GO!
BUT FIRST, I WANT TO KNOW HOW COME YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THE ANYWHERE MACHINE.
A LITTLE MONKEY TOLD ME. SAY, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, DOC? I'VE TAKEN YOU EVERYWHERE YOU'VE WANTED TO GO!
EVERYWHERE INTO DANGER! I SAW THAT THING ON MARS. IT WOULD HAVE ATTACKED US, HAD I MADE ANY SUDDEN MOVES!
YOU'VE GOT ME WRONG. I DON'T WANT THIS MISSION TO FAIL!
6

WE'LL SEE! YOU SAID YOU COULD TAKE US ANYWHERE! GINA, PICK A PLACE!
MR. JANUS, CAN YOU TAKE US TO HEAVEN?
HEAVEN!? GINA! BE REASONABLE!
NO! I CAN TAKE YOU THERE IF THAT'S WHERE YOU WANT TO GO!
YOU'RE CRAZY!
I'VE ALREADY SET THE CONTROLS... AS SOON AS I THROW THE SWITCH WE'LL BE THERE!
GO AHEAD! STEP OUTSIDE... YOU'LL BE THE FIRST LIVING BEINGS EVER TO SET FOOT ON THE PLANES OF HEAVEN! YOU WON'T EVEN NEED PROTECTIVE SUITS!
OH LORD! THIS CAN'T BE HEAVEN!
YOU TRICKED US, JANUS!
I HAVE NOT TRICKED YOU! THIS IS HEAVEN!

THIS PLACE IS AN ABOMINATION! IT REEKS OF BRIMSTONE AND MISERY!
FOOLS!
THE MONKEY SPOKE!
LOOK AT ME CLOSELY! I AM DR. HOENIG'S SOUL! EVEN IN THIS ABSURD CAGE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE ME! NOW LOOK TO JANUS FOR HIS TRUE FACE! THE MASKS ARE OFF! WE HAVE ALL REACHED JOURNEY'S END!
I HAVE BROUGHT YOU TO HEAVEN! MY HEAVEN! ANADEMONIUM! THE KINGDOM OF HELL!
HA! HA! HA!
END

Tom Sutton

An Original One of a Kind Stand Alone Character

by **Bill Pearson**

Background panel by Tom, courtesy of Mark Bunboy © Charlton Comics Group

THIS ARTICLE WILL end up being about Tom Sutton, but in tribute to Tom's chaotic mind and stream-of-consciousness conversational style, I'm going to wander in and out with observations on everything from Genesis to the ultimate fate of the universe.

Who am I, and why should my opinions about Tom's artwork be of interest? All of you reading this have your own ideas and are mainly interested in whether my ideas match yours. So here we go.

Tom was born in the year 1937, somewhere in the Boston area. I'm not sure exactly where, and I'm not even remotely aware of anything about his childhood except that at one point he came into contact with a professional artist named Norman Rockwell, who happened to be a neighbor. Rockwell looked at Tom's artwork, and he encouraged him to study and possibly become an artist himself. Who knows how much talent he revealed then, or how sincere Rockwell's praise was? I've praised the artwork of many youngsters over the years, with scant evidence to warrant it. An aspiration is enough to warrant it, actually. Too many children have no ambition, no interests, and no imagination.

A year later, on the 27th of July, 1938, I was born in Belle Fourche, South Dakota. All I knew from very early on was that I wanted to become some kind of writer or artist when I grew up. I was simply fascinated by every story and every piece of art that came before my eyes.

Out in San Francisco, California, on that same day, a girl child named Natasha Nikolaevna Zakharenko was born to a Russian-American couple newly arrived in the country. Later in life she changed her name to Natalie Wood. By a fluke of chance, she was chosen at the age of four to "act" in a movie being filmed near her parents' residence. I never met Natalie Wood or was a particular fan of hers, but after I learned that she was born on the same day I was, I took note of the events in her life, and still, years after her death, I think of her occasionally, and wonder about the similarities and dissimilarities between her life and mine.

Then, not that it's relevant to anything written so far, on the 8th of May, 1940, in Teaneck, New Jersey, a boy named Eric Hilliard Nelson was born to parents who both happened to be musicians. His grandparents had also been musicians, and apparently all Ricky Nelson ever wanted to do from early childhood was to become a musician as well.

So far as I know, none of these four people ever met, including Tom and me. Tom said he thought we had, but I would have remembered it. But we were good friends for many years in a way I'll explain as we go along, if you'll stay with me.

IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER, Tom joined one of the branches of the armed forces of our nation (you'll have to find the exact facts elsewhere) and spent four years seeing the world. (He had vivid memories of his time spent in Japan.) He got married, had two sons, and worked at various low-level positions as a staff artist at various Boston ad agencies until

he managed to secure his first assignments drawing comic books. Others, the publisher of this magazine for one, know a lot more about exactly which comics Tom illustrated over the course of his career than I do. I can hardly remember which comics I had a part in.

I was drafted at age seventeen, along with nine other Phoenix-area high school seniors, by a large manufacturing company that sent scouts to select the most promising drafting students. I didn't have to accept this offer, but my parents thought it was a miraculous opportunity. Immediately upon graduation we attended a three-month crash course, at a very respectable salary, and then were absorbed into the workforce of the company, where I spent two years drawing valve assemblies and other parts for rockets. I don't get many opportunities to brag about myself, but the engineers bid for us out of their individual budgets, and I got the highest wage increase of the ten graduates of that company course. This was the mid-fifties, when the U.S. and Russia were expending most of their national treasuries on rockets and other weapons, and I was too young and dumb to even consider that I might be morally against being a part of such an undertaking.

Out in Hollywood, in the movie *Rebel Without a Cause*, Natalie had arrived, at age seventeen, as a force to be reckoned with. She'd been adorable as the child in *Miracle on 34th Street* years earlier, and had continued as a child actress both in films and TV since (always crying, it seemed to me), and now, apparently, she was the real deal, someone who wanted very much to be a serious actress as an adult.

Natalie's success didn't mean anything to me at the time, but Ricky Nelson's did. I was jealous of Ricky. Why, he wasn't even as old as I was, but he was handsome, singing on TV, the girls were crazy about him, and it seemed to me that he got all the breaks and had a charmed life.

Tom got divorced. His wife took his two sons and married another man, and he had very little contact with any of them again until late in life when one of his sons established a casual relationship that never really approached a father-son bonding. He carried on as a carouser and a womanizer. Through it all, he drew comic books.

Back in Phoenix, Arizona, AiResearch Manufacturing Company lost a big government contract and I was laid off, along with half the draftsmen on staff. I guess the government had enough rockets. I'm glad it happened because then, at age nineteen, I went to New York with a friend named Dan Adkins, who had just been discharged from the Air Force. Dan, who was at the time the undisputed top science fiction fan artist, was ready to become a professional. I wasn't, but I managed to get a job as a technical illustrator for the Underwood Typewriter Company.

As the years passed, Natalie turned into a real beauty. I was dubious that she could pull off the role of a stripper in the movie *Gypsy* because she was so thin, but she did very well, even in the stage numbers, dressed scantily though certainly modestly by today's standards. I was amused when she

The cover of **Ghostly Haunts** #38, May 1974, was Tom's self-professed favorite of all his Charlton covers. © Charlton Comics Group.

divorced Robert Wagner, married another guy, and then remarried Wagner years later. Apparently her private life wasn't as serene as she always appeared in publicity photos.

Ricky Nelson was an absolute sensation as a teenager, no doubt about it. But the hits were just part of the past when the Beatles stunned the world and changed popular music forever. He tried to hang onto his career, but as an adult the audiences wanted him to dress as he did as a teenager, and sing his teenage songs. They booed when he came out as he was then, singing new songs that hadn't cracked the Top Forty.

Tom got married again. Then divorced again. Then married and divorced again. He drank too much. Through it all, he drew comic books.

As for me, the '60s were a miraculous mix of work and play in the big leagues in Manhattan. By day I was the production manager of an art studio, by night a freelance writer and

member of Wally Wood's gang, producing *Thunder Agents* comics. I even had time to date, now that I could afford to take a girl somewhere besides the automat for sandwiches and coffee. There was a certain intersection on the east side of town with a bank on each of the four corners. I had an account in each one; one for my job at Admaster Prints, one for my magazine *witzend*, one for my back-issue comic book business (Honest Jack Filcher's Old Paper Emporium), and a savings account in the fourth, to provide enough to pay taxes on the income of the other three. By the end of the decade I was burned out and left town.

This account isn't meant to be anything like factual history concerning dates and time lines. Life is too fractured and fragmented (for me at least) to try to maintain exact records of my own life, much less that of others, but at some point, with one fatal misstep, Natalie had an accident. She was dead at age 43. She died in 1981, the same year as and shortly after Wally Wood, which means nothing to anybody except me. Not long ago I happened to see the movie she'd made as a child in which she almost (in real life) drowned. Yes indeed, I think of Natalie every once in a while, not only when watching one of her movies.

It's been a long time since I was jealous of Ricky Nelson. Not only did he die tragically in a plane accident, the only thing the press wanted to talk about were the allegations that it was related to drug abuse. Poor Ricky. I hear his records occasionally on the Oldies station I listen to, and, you know, he *was* pretty good!

I'D LONG ADMIRED Tom Sutton's work, and handled a lot of his pages as an editor at Charlton Comics in the '70s, but I'd never spoken to him. Late one night, a few days after Wally Wood died, he called. He was distraught and wanted to tell me how much Woody had meant to him. It was a lengthy conversation, the first of many. You might think a phone-only friendship wouldn't qualify as a true friendship, but ours was. We didn't have to occupy the same room or get used to each other's eccentricities and bad habits in order to form a lasting bond. I think it was because we were so close in age and had both labored as commercial artists of one sort or another all our lives that made it possible to relate to just about every subject from politics and social changes, movies and music, to discussions about pens and brushes and papers and inks. It was usually Tom who called, usually late in the evening (middle of the night, his time) and when I recognized his voice, I knew whatever I was doing would have to be postponed. A short call from Tom was about an hour and a half.

Tom had been freelancing for so many years that he'd forgotten (if he ever knew) the time-pressured job of an editor. Editors hated to talk to Tom because he was incapable of getting to the point. Editors need concise questions or answers, not meandering musings, which might or might not communicate the purpose of the call. But off the job, and rarely too busy to cut him short, I learned to enjoy our conversations, and eventually I became as much of a rambler as he was, breaking off one line of thought if another popped into my head, randomly, no matter how obscure or trivial.

Sometimes he'd call to complain that he couldn't find a certain kind of paper he liked to work on, or a pen or set of colored pencils. He knew I'd had similar frustrations, but that wasn't really the purpose of his call. It was an excuse to start a conversation. He was just lonely and wanted to talk. I'm seldom lonely (lucky me), but I know a lot of people who are, much of the time, and it's difficult for them.

Ah, but I'm running out of digressions! Soon I must get to the point of this diatribe. A comment or three about the talent of this man, and why I contend he was more than a cartoonist (which is a worthy enough talent in itself) but in fact a full-bore artist with a capital *A!* and an exclamation point.

About eight years ago, within a year or two either way, the house Tom had lived in for years was sold, and the new owner gave him thirty days to move out! Crisis time! Like many of us, he'd accumulated a houseful of (primarily) paper items. And he was living month to month, paying rent, without any reserves. He found an apartment, much smaller than the house, but it meant discarding half his possessions. After he was settled in the apartment, he told me that, among boxes of old comics, magazines and other goods, he'd carted out hundreds of his paintings and other originals, and left them on the street next to his garbage can. I was appalled. I moaned and groaned. I told him that if I'd known he was going to do that I would have paid the shipping to have them sent to me. "They weren't comic book pages," he said. "I can appreciate other art besides comics." I told him. "I didn't have time to pack them anyway," he said, and that was the end of it.

It wasn't comics for Tom the way it's comics for most of the superhero artists. For them it's because they fantasized about being superheroes when they were young and carried that fascination into their adult lives, getting a charge out of drawing big muscled guys with POWER! For Tom, it was a way to be an artist without having to illustrate products or advertise somebody's business or do pretty landscapes or portraits.

He tried other ways, but it was through the comic book industry that he was able to fashion a life for himself where he could get up every morning and sit down at his drawing board and create pictures out of his own imagination.

THINGS WERE SO LOOSE at Charlton that Tom would send in unsolicited covers as well as complete stories. Sometimes the covers would fit a story, but often we'd get a package out of the blue with two or three paintings or half-drawings/half-paintings related to nothing at all. If George Wildman liked one, he'd show it to Joe Gill and ask him if he wanted to write a story about it. That was more than enough inspiration for Joe to write a story.

Joe Gill, now there's a character. The story of his life could make a fabulous movie, and I only know a few anecdotes. I witnessed the following one day shortly after I started working for the company. Joe wrote his stories right there in the office. One day, close to closing time, he put on his hat and was walking toward the door when I heard George Wildman call his name. Joe looked over the top of the partition that separated George from the rest of us lowly employees (me and a secretary and a roomful of color separators) and George said, "Joe, I need a six-page *Billy the Kid.*" Joe walked back to his desk, took off his hat, typed furiously for about fifteen minutes, put on his hat, and on his way out tossed a six-page *Billy the Kid* script over the partition onto George's desk. What a dynamo, that Joe Gill!

If a cover was used, Tom was paid for it. Otherwise they just stacked up. Ditko and Boyette and the other artists liked to work for Charlton for exactly the same reasons. No plotting sessions or changes at any stage. Nobody had to okay pencils before going to a finish, and if changes, for one reason or another, simply had to be made, well, that's what I was there for.

Except for a long period when he illustrated *Star Trek* comics in a restrained, simple style, Tom's work was always

Haunted Love #1, Apr. 1973. From a copy of the original art, courtesy of Bill Pearson. © Charlton Comics Group.

uniquely offbeat, never "Look At Me" bold, but bold in a design sense that was probably not appreciated by most of the people who bought the comics his work appeared in. The rates for *Star Trek* were just too good to pass up, he told me, though he hated the work. For the most part, Tom's art appeared in back-of-the-book stories, occasionally as lead features when his style matched the premise, like the *I, Vampire* series he did for DC Comics.

He really didn't care. He and Pat Boyette, another phone pal over decades, had a lot of similarities in personality. Both were accomplished and versatile, with small egos that didn't require fan adulation to keep them going. Neither was adept at doing superheroes. Pat died slowly, Tom almost instantly. Both dead and gone.

Wally Wood died penniless and at the lowest ebb of a life filled with lows and lower. I think he had some happy hours during the E.C. years, the early years of his first marriage. I hope so, anyway.

IT'S EASY TO SECOND-GUESS what others should have done with their lives, particularly after they've left this mortal coil; not easy at all to judge one's own circuitous path from birth to death. I'm sure I've made many wrong decisions along the way, and will surely make a few more before I'm gone, even if I go next week.

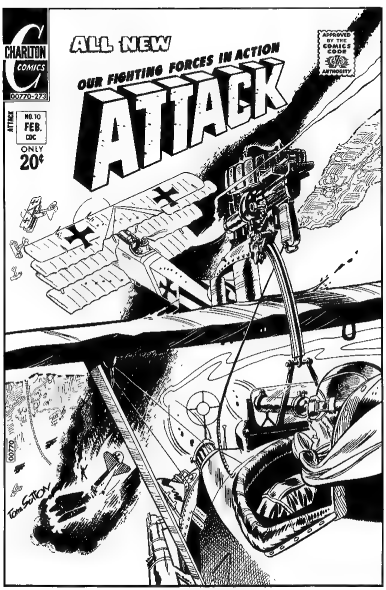
Natalie wasn't comfortable anywhere near bodies of water. She didn't have to be on that boat at all.

Ricky should have taken the train.

Wally Wood should have stayed with his first wife and gotten a better psychoanalyst.

Tom Sutton shouldn't have married at all, and he smoked and drank too much. He should have lived in Manhattan and made more of an effort to socialize with people in all areas of publishing comics. As it is, he was always the outsider.

I'm not jealous of anybody at my stage of life. I've been pretty lucky, when I think about it. Never worked hard enough to hurt, have a soft life now, and time to reflect on the brilliant artists I've been fortunate enough to know and collaborate with over the years.



Attack #10, Feb. 1973. From a copy of the original art, courtesy of Bill Pearson. © Charlton Comics Group.

Wally Wood was a master cartoonist, a genuine artist by anybody's measure, but his fabulous style was a synthesis of the best of the best cartoonists he was exposed to in his formative years. His trees were Foster trees, his figures were Raymond figures, and his action and animation were derived from Crane. His blacks were Caniff blacks, his cute little aliens were Kelly's swamp animals to the next degree, and he learned a *lot* of tricks from Eisner. I'm not saying everything he did was a swipe, far from it. He simply ingested the oeuvres of the great cartoonists who preceded him and built upon that foundation with his own formidable imagination.

Tom Sutton was an artist who used cartooning as a medium to create unique images, not one the same, ever. It would have been impossible for him to recreate covers the way many artists do these days. The idea of repeating something he'd done previously would have been worse for him than breaking rock with a pickax in a prison camp. It was the challenge of each blank panel that kept him going day after day, year after year.

I call your attention to the cover of *Haunted Love* #1, published by Charlton Comics with an April 1973 cover date. [***Ed. note:*** *See previous page.*] At one time I owned the original art, but was forced to sell it, along with other originals, when during a particularly bleak period the mortgage was overdue and I was desperate. But I did manage to get a full-size quality print made, prior to the sale.

Tom knew when he did it that it would be colored garishly, printed poorly and distributed indiscriminately throughout the country. He knew that most people who saw it would give it one or two lingering looks and then forget it; that it would be discarded and gone forever in a matter of days. He not only knew, but I think he was happy or at least satisfied to be producing disposable artwork for an anonymous and callous mass readership. If it was good enough for Wally Wood (Tom's hero), my impudent surmise imagines, it was good enough for Tom Sutton. No reviewers with eager critiques, no disdainful customers demanding more tasteful productions, no unhappy publishers insisting on a certified "house style." He had succeeded in living the life of an artist, chained to his drawing board by

choice, a complaint of Woody's that had been passed along to those who understood what he meant.

Just look at the image of the beautiful young girl in the mirror. It didn't have to be a mirror image. It could have been the same scene without that complication. But as Tom designed it, the storm outside is shown as vividly as the Gothic design of the mirror's frame and the candles throwing eerie lighting on the face of the wretched man who is almost at the point of raping her! One hand is raised in shock, the effect doubled by the reflected image. The little gargoyle looking down from the top of the frame is the master touch, helping to form a perfect composition.

Another digression. I can't help mentioning that someone on Charlton's staff at the time apparently thought the word "edition" meant the same thing as "issue," an error that wouldn't have been made by Marvel or DC, but one more example of the looseness of Charlton's operation.

It's a personal opinion, and others might scoff, but this cover to me is a work of art. The image itself, the secure and obviously swift technique, just enough but not too much detail . . . it's simply a marvel, and surely only one of dozens of images Tom created the same week.

I SUPPOSE IT'S COMFORTING to believe, as some people do, that there's another life after death in some kind of heaven where they'll live in bliss with their family and friends forever. I've always been told I have a great imagination, but the belief in an afterlife is something I couldn't accept even as a child. The universe is simply too big and ever-evolving to pay any attention at all to our humble race, or even the planet we inhabit. The hope for a second chance at paradise beyond this vulgar earthly realm is unfortunately just a desperate dream kept in circulation through generations of pain and regret.

I believe we create our own heaven and hell here on earth, mingling with the other singular inhabitants during our short run. But I'm comforted by the less grandiose belief that people remain alive as long as they're remembered. Aside from the unhappy thought that Hitler will be remembered longer than most, it's at least as believable as Scientology. As far as I'm concerned, Tom's still chained to his drawing board, and Ricky's still crooning in the background. Natalie's still emoting somewhere at the edge of my consciousness, and Fred Astaire is still dancing, dressed in top hat and tails, as cleverly and gracefully as he ever did.

Oh, and about Genesis. Before the Big Bang, a universe as complex as ours came together in one ultimate Black Hole which then exploded to create our current universe. There never was nothing, and there never will be.

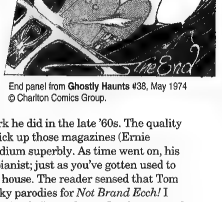
(*Author's P.S.:* While Natalie Wood was alive, every reference to her birthdate listed it as 27 July 1938. After writing this article, my editor informed me that every reference he can find puts it at 20 July 1938. This, of course, completely destroys the empirical logic of my discourse unless, somehow, I too was born on the 20th, which I'm prepared to accept if you are. Otherwise, forget the whole thing, and let me tell you, I'm pretty burned up about the entire matter!)

© 2004 Bill Pearson

a few words about Tom Sutton

by Batton Lash

THE FIRST TIME I saw Tom Sutton's work, I didn't like it. I believe it was in *Not Brand Ecch!*, Marvel's self-parodying humor title. But as time went on, I warmed up to it quite a bit. Tom had a style that was very "baggy pants" burlesque. Lots of characters with scattershot visual gags. In fact, when *NBE* was canceled and it was announced that Tom would be drawing a "dramatic" comic (I think it was *Captain Marvel*), I was disappointed—I wanted Tom to be funny!


IN THE OLD HOUSE HAUNTED FOR THREE MANY YEARS...A SHADOWY FIGURE SAT AT A DESK AND...
LET'S SEE... WHAT SHALL I BE THIS TIME... AN ACTOR? NO... A GREAT ARTIST, PERHAPS? NO... I'LL BE A COMIC BOOK ILLUSTRATOR ...IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH "TALENT."
The End

End panel from **Ghostly Haunts** #38, May 1974
© Charlton Comics Group.

But I was pleasantly surprised. Tom's "straight" comics were terrific, especially the Warren work he did in the late '60s. The quality in the Warren books was declining at that time, and Tom's art was practically the only reason to pick up those magazines (Ernie Colon's art was the other saving grace during that period). Sutton utilized the black-and-white medium superbly. As time went on, his style loosened up—and the work just got better! It was almost like watching a classically trained pianist; just as you've gotten used to an adequate interpretation of Chopin, suddenly he breaks into boogie-woogie and brings down the house. The reader sensed that Tom Sutton was in his element with this anything-goes, free-for-all style that had its roots in those wacky parodies for *Not Brand Ecch!* I recall a strip he did for *The Monster Times* about a Godzilla-type monster that wreaks havoc in New York. It was loose, flamboyant and fun! It was the perfect combination of "dramatic" and "cartoony" styles. And he lettered his own stuff, as well! The perfect synthesis of words and pictures. I was delighted to see him move over to Charlton where their laissez-faire policy was the perfect environment for the freewheeling Tom Sutton. Now, I don't say *everything* he did was successful, but, jeez! Even when a Tom Sutton experiment failed, it had verve and enthusiasm behind it. It may not have worked 100 percent, but it was sure as hell interesting!

Tom Sutton may have been born a generation too soon for comics. I always got the impression that the business didn't exactly know what to do with him. Sure, he was a consummate pro and could deliver a job on deadline, but he seemed to me too iconoclastic for the status quo of the business of his day. If only he had embraced self-publishing; what if the imagination that went into those wildly creative *Planet of the Apes* stories were fueled into his own creation—Lovecraft by way of Will Elder? We'll never know. What we *do* know is that Tom Sutton left behind a glorious body of work that will be admired and respected for generations.

© 2004 Batton Lash

Talking to TOM

by Jim Amash

I CALLED TOM SUTTON for the first time. "Hellllloooooo?" Tom said as he stretched out a two-syllable word into a sentence. It was almost as though he was singing the word. I was glad because it was an immediate signal that Tom would be a fun guy to talk to. Not that I really doubted it, because for a year or so, my dearest friend, the late Pat Boyette, was trying to talk me into calling Tom.

Pardon the digression, but let me explain what it took for me to call Tom the first time. I had been aware for years that Pat and Tom were good telephone friends, much to the chagrin of their wallets. Pat would occasionally talk about Tom and always ask, "Do you know Tom Sutton's work?" I'd always laugh, because Pat could never remember that I did. I'd say, "Of course I do. I've told you that before." Then Pat would always ask me why I didn't call Tom, because Tom would love to hear from me. But I'd get busy or procrastinate or shudder at the thought of having another long-distance telephone friend. I had enough trouble affording the people I was calling now.

For a year, Pat kept after me to call Tom. Finally he said, "I know you really want to talk to him, so here's his number again." Pat correctly sensed that I was shy about calling Tom (yeah . . . even I get that way sometimes!). "I've talked about you to Tom, so he'll know who you are." I said, "Pat, you're trapping me, you dog!" He chuckled and said, "Hang up and call him now and then call me back."

I called Tom and after his wonderful greeting, I said, "Is this Tom Sutton, the singing telephone greeter?" He said, "Yes, I am." I told him who I was and he said, "Oh, yeah, you're the guy that Pat Boyette talks about." Tom proceeded to ask me a lot of questions and I managed to ask him a few myself. We had a two-hour conversation as Tom was delighted to talk about the comic book business, among other things.

I kept my word and called Pat as soon as I hung up the telephone. He said, "I knew you two would enjoy talking to each other." I said, "Yeah, but you didn't tell me that Tom talks as much as we do. That's all I need: another talker in my life!" Pat laughed and said, "You need fresh blood, Jim." Of course, I replied, "Yeah, Boyette blood ain't worth a damn. That old tired French blood costs me enough money!" Pat said, "Well . . . Middle Eastern blood isn't cheap either."

From then on, Tom and I became regular telephone buddies. I don't think there was a subject that we didn't dissect in the years we knew each other. We had so many of the same hobbies: old-time radio shows, old movies, politics, comics, history, U.F.O.'s, women (though I am/was happily married the entire time we knew each other), etc. Tom, Pat, and I were such kindred spirits because we all shared the same interests, except that they weren't baseball fans like I was. But both were interested that I was still a semipro baseball player and I'd tell them funny stories about that.

Almost every subject that existed interested Tom (and Pat). Nobody could put a twist on a slice-of-life story like Tom Sutton. Many of those twists were X-rated, so you'll just have to use your imaginations about the kind of comments he'd make. Trust me: all his comments were funny. And expensive, because he'd make me laugh so much that I'm certain we both paid for hours of sheer laughter, both of us unable to talk until our breaths were caught.

Tom had one thing in common with *Mad* magazine's Bill Gaines. Like Gaines, every single time Tom called me, he would introduce himself. "Hi Jim, this is Tom Sutton." That used to crack me up because Tom had a voice you couldn't forget. He sounded a little like Hans Conreid, with a pixie-ish voice. It was a voice you couldn't miss, although I do now.

Tom was a funny man, full of life, a wry observer of the human condition. Anything that seemed normal was boring to him. "Normal" wasn't fun to Tom, who thought life was meant to be fun. "Normal" didn't fit his criteria. He didn't like phonies and had his own way of dealing with them. I've told this story before, but here it is again: Just a few years ago, Tom was asked by an editor if he'd done much comic book work. Tom gave a brief run-down on his career and the editor asked to see samples. Tom gathered about two pounds' worth of his comic books and mailed them off. The answer he received? "We didn't publish those comics." Instead of getting mad at the editor, Tom chuckled and said, "Maybe that's your problem?" Tom knew he was getting the runaround.

Tom survived life with humor. About the only thing he didn't make fun of was Pat Boyette. Pat's death was a major blow to both of us (one I'm still recovering from). During our last phone conversation, I said, "At least we still have each other to talk to." Tom said, "Yeah, we fill the void Pat created as best we can." When I got the news Tom had passed away, that comment immediately came to mind, because Tom's death deepened that void for me.

I've known a lot of people in my life and have some great friends. I'm proud that Tom was one of them.

Text & art © 2004 Jim Amash

WE MISS YOU, TOM!
-Jim Amash '03

Sutton Place

by Bhob Stewart

IN 1992, when I was editing DC Comics' first trading card series, *Cosmic Cards*, I assigned one of the cards to Tom Sutton. It sent my mind cartwheeling back over the decades to the 1960s when I worked for Topps Chewing Gum as an editor-gagwriter in their Product Development Department.

During that same time frame, Tom was a prolific Topps cartoonist, churning out trading cards and other humor products. Art by Tom, Wally Wood, Art Spiegelman, Ralph Reese, Basil Wolverton and others gave the Topps cards and posters a distinctive look, vaguely *Mad*-related, as though they belonged in a curious catalog of *Mad* merchandise never given a Gaines greenlight.

Topps later moved to Whitehall Street in lower Manhattan, in the shadow of the World Trade Center, but in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was still located in Brooklyn's Bush Terminal, a prison-like building used as a WWII depot for shipping supplies to GIs in Europe. Various cartoonists made the trek through Brooklyn to Topps—Wood, Jack Davis, Robert Crumb, Al Williamson—but Tom was a no-show at Topps and ditto for conventions. It added a certain air of mystery.

At the time, I didn't realize that Tom was becoming something of a recluse. In later years, he rarely left his drawing table. Tom actually had gone to a comics convention once but only to take his son there. As he explained it, they walked around the convention floor, but he found the event made him uncomfortable. He said to his son, "Let's go," and they left after being there for less than fifteen minutes.

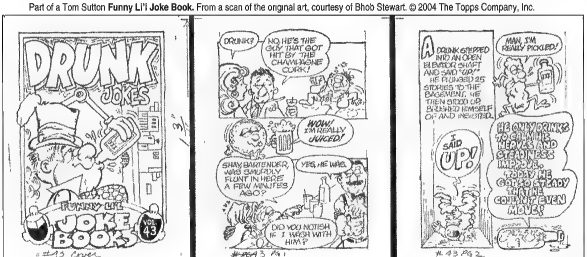
In 1970, when we were both working on the same Topps product, *Funny Li'l Joke Books*, he invited me over. I walked through Government Center to Boston's North End (the setting of Lovecraft's "Pickman's Model"), meeting Tom at a very neat and clean apartment he shared with a young woman named Donna. We talked in his narrow, step-down studio area, and after Donna came home from work, the three of us drove across Boston and spent the evening in a Back Bay bar. I was struck by the contrast: She appeared to be very straight-arrow, while he was charmingly eccentric, verging on a mild goofiness.

At some point in 1970, he moved from Boston to Newburyport, Massachusetts, and I lost contact with him. Years passed before I visited him in Newburyport, a place that suited his hermetic, Lovecraftian outlook on life. The antiquarian aspects of this coastal community were, in fact, the inspiration for Lovecraft's atmospheric seaport town of Innsmouth, as noted in Joseph Morales' "A Short Tour of Lovecraftian New England" (*http://baharna.com/cmythos/newengl.htm*).

That visit set in motion a long friendship. Phone calls from Tom would often focus on editors who annoyed him. He would describe his art tricks and drawing tools or veer into tales about cartoonists Bill Ward, Pat Boyette and others. Usually, he would never talk about the work on his drawing table unless I asked, "So what are you working on now?" A favorite theme centered around editors who made unreasonable demands, and I often got the impression that he sometimes sabotaged potential assignments by intentionally provoking the uninformed editors who irritated him. Did he really do this so they would lose interest and give the assignment to someone else? He had a confrontational manner when dealing with certain editors who knew little or nothing about writing or art, and his recreations of those discussions were hilarious.

Sometimes he would relate anecdotes from his past. Before he lived in Boston's North End, he had an apartment in the Symphony Hall area near Huntington Avenue. One day there was a break-in while he was working quietly at his drawing board. He reached in a drawer, pulled out a toy gun and told the wannabe thieves to lie face down on the floor. They did, and he then called the cops, continuing to use the toy gun to keep the frightened burglars spread-

Part of a Tom Sutton **Funny Li'l Joke Book.** From a scan of the original art, courtesy of Bhob Stewart. © 2004 The Topps Company, Inc.


DRUNK JOKES
FUNNY LI'L JOKE BOOKS
#43 Cover
OOOHHH!
NO, HE'S THE GUY THAT GOT HIT BY THE CHAMPAGNE CORK!
WOW! I'M REALLY JUICED!
SHAW-SHANKENDER, WAS SMUDGY FLINT IN HERE A FEW MINUTES AGO?
YES, HE WAS.
DID YOU NOTICH IF I WASH WITH HIM?
#43 Pg 1
A DRUNK STRIPPED INTO AN OPEN MANHOLE CHUTE AND SAID "OH" HE FLUNKED 25 STORIES TO THE BASEMENT. HE THEN SLIDD OR SLIDNED HIMSELF OF AND INSIDTHERE
MAN, I'M REALLY PICKLED!
SAID "UP!"
#43 Pg 2

eagled on the floor until the police arrived and led them away. Did this really happen? Well, that's the story as he told it.

Listening to Tom talk over the years, I came to realize he filtered out the real world. Titles of books or movies or dates of events were of little interest to him. His rambling pop culture references were often so vague and undefined that a phone call could turn into a guessing game, prompting a twenty-questions approach just to deduce what he was talking about. These convoluted conversations sometimes were punctuated with startling comments, such as, "They want me to draw a cat, but it must be a certain kind of cat. Tell me, who or what is Garfield?" Such statements were attention-grabbers. Were they put-ons, or did he not know?

For years, he drew the *Star Trek* comic book, filling a file cabinet with an immense collection of *Star Trek* photo reference. Then came a call from DC Comics: "Tom, we're doing *The Next Generation*."

"Fine. The next generation of what?"

"Tom, it's a new *Trek* series, a spin-off with a complete new cast. We have the rights, and we're ready to begin."

"Not me," he responded. After years of filling file folders with photos of all the original *Star Trek* episodes and drawing the original cast members from every angle, he had no intention of starting such a procedure all over again from scratch.

One day, he got a phone call from PETA. They wanted Tom to contribute to a PETA comic book, planned to promote animal rights. Each artist, he was told, could draw a story about any animal of their choice. Tom listened patiently as the idea was explained. Then he asked, "Can I do rats?"

The PETA editor naturally said yes, since the organization supports the rights of all animals; Ingrid Newkirk, the founder of PETA, once said, "When it comes to feelings like hunger, pain, and thirst, a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy." So Tom began to develop a spin-off from his earlier story, "Rat!" (from Marvel's *Arrgh!*, 1974–75). Probing deeper into the Rodent Universe, he began work on the pages that eventually became "Wratzwerks" (*Death Rattle*, 1996). Tom knew I was fascinated with his desire to create stories about rats, so in 1990 he mailed me photocopies of "Wratzwerks" pages, minus dialogue or captions.

In the early 1990s I used to watch the TV series *Night after Night* on Comedy Central. Starring Allan Havey with Nick Bakay, *Night after Night* had no studio audience, but Havey and Bakay did an inventive comedy talk show, well remembered today by those who followed it over three seasons. Visible on Havey's set were a working fax machine and a computer. One day, during my lunch hour at DC, I phoned Comedy Central, asked for the number of that fax machine, and amazingly, someone gave it to me with no hesitation. I then asked what time the show was taped and also was given that information, no questions asked. Now I was ready. I went to DC's fax machine, inserted "Wratzwerks," finished eating my tuna sandwich and went back to work on one of DC's ill-fated Piranha Press books.

That night, as Havey was doing his monologue, Tom's Wratz began to emerge from Havey's fax machine. The fax whirred. Mutant Wratz scurried forth in a paper parade. What were the possibilites, I wondered, of a Rodent Revolution, night after night on *Night after Night*? Havey stared at his fax machine, watching Tom's Wratz running amok, dancing and whirring. Comedy Central had been Suttonized to my satisfaction, and I fell asleep.

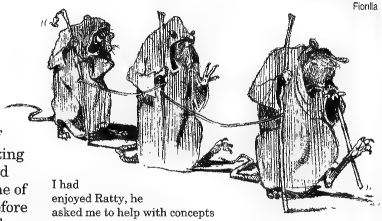
© 2004 Bhob Stewart

"H.P. Lovecraft Visits Innsmouth," by Tom Sutton. A portion of this illustration was published in **Comics Interview** #80, 1990. From a scan of the entire image, courtesy of Bhob Stewart. © 2004 Estate of Tom Sutton

TOM AND RAT! AND ME

by Steve Fiorilla

TOM SUTTON may have been the real Gulley Jimson—the passionate and obsessed artist of Joyce Cary's 1944 novel *The Horse's Mouth*. Alec Guinness played Jimson to a *T* in the 1958 film adaptation of the story. Sutton turned me on to that amazing flick—a film all serious creative types should watch at least once in their lives. In this time of endless remakes, Sutton could have gone before the cameras as Gulley Jimson and delivered an award-winning performance.

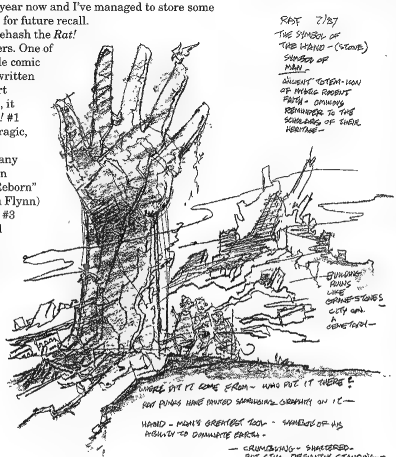


Three blind rat priests. From a copy of the orgina. art, courtesy of and © 2004 Steve Fiorilla

News of Tom's death caught me completely off guard. A midday phone call on a Friday from an Amesbury, Massachusetts, police detective put it plain: Tom was gone. To me this meant an abrupt end to years of one- and two-hour phone chats that covered the A-to-Z of true weirdness, ripe nostalgia, and endless imaginings. Up to that point life was just a bitch. Now, without our "babblethons," it would be even worse.

Tom's been gone a year now and I've managed to store some good memories of him for future recall. Right now I'd like to rehash the *Rat!* project with you readers. One of Tom's most memorable comic stories was "Rat!" Cowritten with P.A. Flynn, an art school buddy of Tom's, it ran in Marvel's *Arrgh!* #1 (Dec. 1974). Simple, tragic, and humorous, "Rat!" caught the fancy of many readers and became an instant classic. "Rat Reborn" (again coscripted with Flynn) was printed in *Arrgh!* #3 (May 1975) and ended with a suggestion of further Rat adventures. Tom loved the character he created, always referring to it as "Ratty," and hoped to continue it someday.

In 1987 he finally decided to pick up on it and create a whole *Rat!* saga. It was something he would work on between assignments, and, knowing how much I had enjoyed Ratty, he asked me to help with concepts and sketches. I spent time trying to visualize a post-holocaust mutant-rat society and came up with some strange character designs. One sketch I did of three blind rat priests was Tom's favorite, and they would figure into the Ratty tale as a narrative device. Tom sent part of a first draft and it was stuffed with wild descriptions of Frankenstein-like machinery, insane vivisection experiments, strange appearances by H.P. Lovecraft and a Neal Cassady–inspired Beat character, and even a scene of Ratty on Mars! A graphic novel was something I considered after reading through it all, but Tom ended up beginning it for Denis Kitchen's revived horror title *Death Rattle*. A *Death Rattle* cover and two installments (*Death Rattle* #4, Apr. 1996 & #5, June 1996) ran before Kitchen went down the sink, so to speak. Tom was understandably disappointed, and that seemed to be the end of Ratty.


RAT 2/87
THE SYMBOL OF THE WORD - (STONE)
SYMBOL OF MAN -
ANCIENT TOTEM - MAN OF MORE RECENT FAITH - OMINOUS REMINDER TO THE SCHOLARS OF THEIR HERITAGE -
BUILDINGS RUINS LIKE GIANT STONEHENGES CITY OF A GIANT RACE
RAT RUNS HAVE MUTATED SOMETHING CRAWLING ON IT -
HAND - MAN'S GREATEST TOOL - SYMBOLS OF US HIGHLY TO DOMINATE EARTH -
- CRUMBLING - SHATTERED - BUT STILL DEFIANTLY STANDING - REACHING OUT.

Monument sketch for "Rat City," from a copy of the original art. © 2004 Estate of Tom Sutton

After Tom's passing I went through the folder I have of *Rat!* material and had to wonder about the graphic novel I'd imagined and Tom's delight in having put all his ideas into one big *Rat!* epic. I suspect that every comic artist has that one fun project he or she contemplates for years, and thinking about how many of those projects that may go unrealized will always be a source of aggravation for me.

As for Tom Sutton, well, deadlines are eternal, and I'm sure we can expect the first issue of *Tales from the Freaky Afterlife* anytime now.

© 2004 Steve Fiorilla

Tom Sutton and the art of SQUALOR

by Stefan Petrucha

WHEN ALEX WALD, art director for long-defunct First Publishing, giddily suggested Tom Sutton as the artist for *Squalor,* I did what I always do when presented with a puzzle, and immediately furrowed my brow.

I'd already "met" Tom via his work, a decade or so earlier, when I was a lad, awed and terrified by the bloody and sexy pages of *Creepy* and *Eerie,* and later still when I lay awake terrified (no matter how hard my brain told me it was just a silly story) by some gray ghost of Dr. Graves. But I was older now, vaguely cool, and in my memory, his work had been a tad cartoonish. I wasn't sure it was right. It wasn't the first time I was totally wrong. I assume it won't be the last.

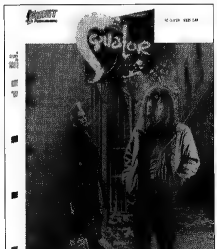
Seeing a drawing based on one's scripted description for the first time is an odd and exhilarating experience. First, it's flattering to have someone else's craft and talent applied to your own. But, specifically with Tom's *Squalor* pencils, everything I'd pictured, everything, was absolutely there—only more so, his own idiom augmenting and actualizing my ideas. If anything, he spoiled me—especially when the experience wasn't repeated with every artist I've worked with since (though in that regard, I confess a streak of great luck).

Sometime after, I was fortunate enough to meet the man in person, driving to his home in Massachusetts with friend Shelby Gragg to snag some photos to accompany an interview I did with Tom for David Kraft's *Comics Interview.* The interview was easy—phone calls with Tom never lasted less than an hour, with topics drifting between Harvey Kurtzman and Jack Kerouack. That's another thing about comics, meeting people you've already known for months: it's an experience akin to seeing those first pages, voice acquiring form and all that, only in this instance I had no idea what to expect. Physically, he was a cross between Santa and a latter-day Jerry Garcia. I still remember his smile when we met—and how comfortable I felt in his dim, paper-strewn basement, where you couldn't move an inch without stepping on, sitting on, bumping into or seeing—art.

To our delight, the underprinted first issue of *Squalor* flew off the shelves—but then, enter the dark side of comics. A "billing problem" with First's printer led to a six-month delay between the first and second issues, hobbling any sales momentum the series might have had. By the second issue, Harry was already an "if only." Though the four-issue run was completed, it seemed to be the end of Professor Keller.

And yet, there was soon hope. No longer profiting from their monthly series (a fact that raised Tom's eyebrows, and really should have tipped me off to the inevitable), First decided to instead annually release bigger and better three-part mini-series, a *Squalor* sequel among them.

To recap for those of you not among its ten thousand readers, Harry "Squalor" Keller is a crazed former physics professor whose jumbled mental state allows him to access an alternate state of reality where he no longer perceives time as linear (say *that* three times fast). In the strange realm of A-time (as in amoral or arrhythmic) he encounters Quirks (a monstrous series of consecutive events waiting to happen), Glitches (packets of emotional energy, like love or hate), and Archetypes (godlike collections of energy, such as The Fool). Oh yeah, he can also use his apprehension of the time streams to alter future events. Plus, he really is crazy, and kind of a bagman. In the first series, he saves a reelected Ronald Reagan from the Zero Curse. A mistake? Who can say? Tom made it all look not only plausible, but inviting.



Squalor #1, Dec. 1989. Cover by J.K. Potter. © 1989, 2004 Stefan Petrucha.

Anyway, Harry had already met an archetype in the first series, the fun-loving, comic-panel-jumping Fool. Since archetypes formed the basis of the major arcana of the Tarot, and the Tarot itself forms a sort of "story of life," for the sequel, aka The Imagining, I decided to center the story on the birth of a new archetype—with all sorts of rumbles going on through the space-time continuum as a result. With a total of 132 pages to play with, I devoted discrete four-page segments to each archetype, starting with the aforementioned Fool, and ending with the newborn Imagining. In the end, there would have been a cool Tom Sutton tarot deck for fun and pagan divination purposes.

Past that, I was knee-deep in James Joyce, so my dense script was full of wink-of-the-eye stream-of-consciousness prose and larded with the tons of references, ranging from Shakespeare to the Beatles, that made the first one so much fun. In my madness, I actually sketched each page (reprinting my stick-figure notes here would be pleasant for neither of us, trust me). Mostly it was an exercise in making sure everything

could fit where I wanted it. I was very worried Tom would be offended by my sudden anal retentive streak. But he took it in stride, said my drawing was getting better, and cackled in a way only he and Uncle Creepy could.

Tom completed about ten pages of pencils before the plug was pulled—first on the series, then on First Publishing itself. Represented here with my own Photoshop-induced lettering are the first four pages, the Zero section.

It wasn't quite the last time Tom and I worked together. First sputtered along a bit doing new Classics Illustrated comics, and Tom and I worked on an adaptation of *Paradise Lost.* When discussing the project, I innocently asked Tom if he could paint. "I . . . I don't know," he said. "Let me check on that." A few days later, I got a call from him. He claimed that after experimenting with oils for a few days, he'd determined that indeed, he could paint, though he couldn't quite remember where he learned it. Perhaps it was his revenge for my anal *Squalor II* sketches. I'll never know. . . .

While I entered my first "dearth of writing in comics" phase (I'm just coming out of my post–*X-Files* employment funk now, thank you), Tom, ever the craftsman, worked diligently throughout. We spoke fairly often over the next year or so—at one point he confessed he'd made the main character of a series he did for DC, *Hacker,* look just like Harry because he loved drawing him so much. While the implied copyright issues gave me a shiver or two, I was far more tickled than distraught.

SQUALOR: PART ONE-SERIES 2 - Book 1
0.
1
SOM TO CONVEY BOTH THE HEART AND MIND OF A SINGLE SOLID INSTANT!
THE GOD, HARRY HERO MANY THANKS FOR ALL I'VE BEEN GIVEN

TOAST UNEVENLY ALL SIGHT AND SOUND ALL TASTE ALL TOUCH ALL ODOR
LIKE MY ABILITY TO ALTER THE FATE OF OTHERS AND THE RETURN OF MOST OF MY SANITY
WHAM!
WISHED I'D REALLY LIED TO GO BACK TO BEING A MORTAL NOW
CAN THERE BE SO MANY SOULS IN SO FAR A WORLD
THERE'S THIS LETTER IN THE MAIL WITH THE MOVIE TICKETS MY FOR ENTERTAIN
GOD YOU SUCK! MAYBE YOU COULD MAKE 2 SAD YES?
CAN STATIC LINES BEGIN MOVEMENT OR MUTE BALLOONS BREATHE SPEECH?
WHILE A TIME CAPE TIMEWARP

Tom lived his life hunched over the drawing board, etching little parts of his psyche out onto the page in plain black and white, building a thoroughfare between his insides and ours. It was fitting he was found, at the end, in the midst of same.

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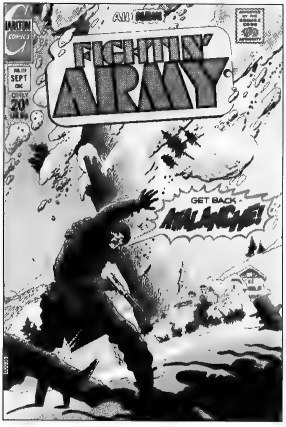
All **Squalor** *text & art © 2004 Stefan Petrucha*

JUNE 19, 12:03 AM. TUNGUSKA, SIBERIA
COGITO ERGO BOOM!
THEY STAND AT BEST AS CEPHERS ALL
AND BEG YOUR KIND INDULGENCE TO FULLY SEEING THESE SMEARS
CREEE!
JUNE 19 12:03 P.M.
DAMN! I LOST MY KEYS!
SO GOD DOES THAT MEAN NOD
WHUMP!
US MAIL

THE TOM SUTTON CHARLTON COVER GALLERY

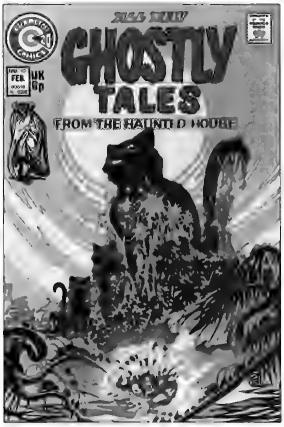
All cover images © Charlton Comics Group

Ghostly Haunts #33, July 1973



Fightin' Army #111, Sept. 1973

The Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves #44 Jan. 1974



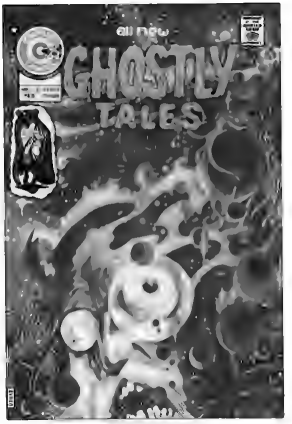
Ghostly Tales #110, Dec. 1974

Ghost Manor #18, May 1975

Haunted #17, July 1974

Ghostly Haunts #40, Sept. 1974

Ghostly Haunts #41, Nov 1974

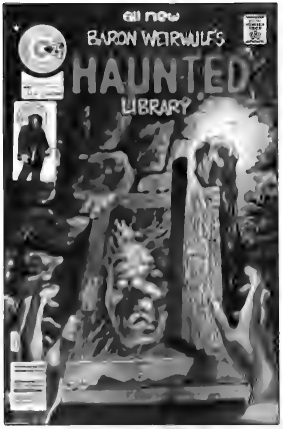


Ghostly Tales #113, Feb 1975

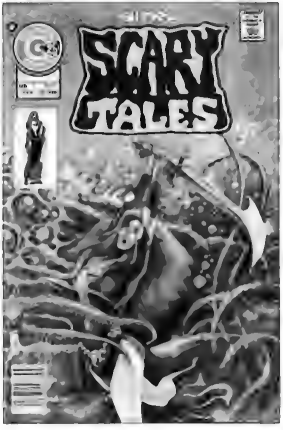
Fightin' Marines Presents War #122, Mar. 1975

Haunted Love #10, July 1975

Ghost Manor #27, Jan 1976



Haunted #20, Jan 1976



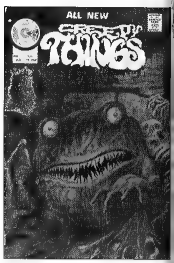
Scary Tales #4, Feb 1976

I Love You #118, June 1976

The Tom Sutton Charlton Index

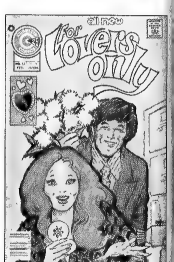
Compiled by Michael Ambrose, with help from Mark Burbey; some data supplied by the Grand Comic Book Database project (*www.comics.org*). Additions & corrections welcome. All cover images © Charlton Comics Group.

TITLE	ISSUE	DATE	FEATURE	PAGES	NOTES
Attack	9	Dec 72	One Man Air Force!	7	cov (fr splash)
Attack	10	Feb 73	Roger and the Red Baron	10	cov
Attack	13	Sep 73	Needed: One Miracle!	8	cov; scr-Gill
Attack	13	Sep 73	Needed: One Miracle!	8	Modern Comics rep 1978
Attack	15	Mar 75	Cover		
Attack	16	Aug 79	One Man Air Force!	7	cov (fr int pan); reps Attack 9, 12-72
Attack	35	Jul 80	Don't Tell Me to Kill!	8	reps Fightin' Army 114, 7-74
Battlefield Action	72	Dec 81	Needed: One Miracle!	8	reps Attack 13, 9-73
Battlefield Action	78	Dec 82	Lucky Lady	11	cov (fr splash); reps F' Marines 134, 12-77
Beyond the Grave	1	Jul 75	Cover		painted
Beyond the Grave	3	Dec 75	The Lonesome Bride of Carnabey Castle	4 text illos	
Beyond the Grave	9	May 83	The Kokuikaton	10	scr-TFS; reps Mfl 2, 10-75
Billy the Kid	111	Feb 75	They Stand Accused! (Ghost Train)	6	scr-Charles Kazan
Billy the Kid	130	Aug 79	They Stand Accused! (Ghost Train)	6	reps BTK 111, 2-75
Charlton Classics	8	Jun 81	The Thing in the Hole	7	scr-TFS; reps GT 111, 9-74
Creepy Things	1	Jul 75	The Well	6	cov (painted), scr
Creepy Things	2	Oct 75	"Slimes, Slogs and Glumps"	6	cov (painted); scr-Cuti
Creepy Things	2	Oct 75	"Slimes, Slogs and Glumps"	6	Modern Comics rep 1976
Creepy Things	3	Dec 75	One Last Kiss	1	cov (painted); scr?
Creepy Things	3	Dec 75	One Last Kiss	1	Modern Comics rep 1977
Creepy Things	4	Feb 76	Man's Best Fiend	7	cov (painted); scr-Tom Tuna
Creepy Things	4	Feb 76	Man's Best Fiend	7	Modern Comics rep 1978
Creepy Things	5	Apr 76		2 text illos	
Creepy Things	6	Jun 76	The Hairy One	9	scr-Gill
Creepy Things	6	Jun 76	The Hairy One	9	Modern Comics rep 1977
E-Man	1	Oct 73	Operation: Rotten Apple! (The Knight)	8	scr-Cuti
E-Man	1	Oct 73	Operation: Rotten Apple! (The Knight)	8	Modern Comics rep 1978
Fightin' Army	108	Mar 73	Cover		
Fightin' Army	108	Mar 73	Cover		Modern Comics rep 1977
Fightin' Army	111	Sep 73	Cover (Avalanche)		
Fightin' Army	113	May 74	Cover		
Fightin' Army	114	Jul 74	Don't Tell Me to Kill!	8	
Fightin' Army	117	Feb 75	Cover (Reunion)		
Fightin' Army	127	Dec 76	The Red Baron	1	
Fightin' Army	140	Aug 79	Cover [?? Possible]		reps ??
Fightin' Army	161	Dec 82	The 20th Century Centaur	1	cov (fr splash); reps ??
Fightin' Marines	107	Dec 72	The Victims!	7	
Fightin' Marines	116	Jan 74	Cover		
Fightin' Marines	117	Jun 74	Cover		for Himes sty, Nazi Hit Man
Fightin' Marines	119	Nov 74	Cover (Vietnam)		
Fightin' Marines	122	Mar 75	Cover		painted
Fightin' Marines	134	Dec 77	Lucky Lady	11	cov (fr splash)
Fightin' Marines	141	Feb 79	The Victims!	7	reps F' Marines 107, 12-72
Fightin' Marines	160	Jan 82	Cover		reps F' Marines 117, 6-74
Fightin' Marines	166	Dec 82	Cover		reps F' Marines 116, 1-74
For Lovers Only	83	Feb 76	Cover		painted
Ghostly Haunts	33	Jul 73	Cover		
Ghostly Haunts	37	Jan 74	Cover		
Ghostly Haunts	38	May 74	The Weirdest Character I've Ever Known!	7	cov; scr-Gill
Ghostly Haunts	39	Jul 74	Cover		
Ghostly Haunts	40	Sep 74	The Game Keeper	7	cov, scr; cov signed "Grisly"
Ghostly Haunts	40	Sep 74	The Game Keeper	7	Modern Comics rep 1977
Ghostly Haunts	41	Nov 74	A Lovely Night in Paris!	9	cov; scr-Gil
Ghostly Haunts	41	Nov 74	A Lovely Night in Paris!	9	Modern Comics rep 1978
Ghostly Haunts	41	Nov 74	The Woman in the Painting	1 text illo	
Ghostly Haunts	49	Apr 76	Cover		painted
Ghostly Haunts	55	Oct 77	"Baku, the Dream Eater"	8	cov (fr int pan), scr
Ghostly Haunts	57	Mar 78	The Game Keeper	7	cov (fr int pan); reps GH 40, 9-74
Ghostly Tales	100	Dec 72	Crystal Clear	7	cov?
Ghostly Tales	105	Jul 73	Cover		
Ghostly Tales	106	Aug 73	Those Tentacles!	8	cov; scr-Cuti



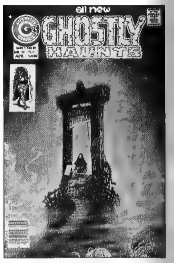
Creepy Things #1, July 1975

Creepy Things #2, Oct. 1975



For Lovers Only #83, Feb. 1976

Ghostly Tales	107	Oct 73	The Anywhere Machine!	8	scr-Cuti; layouts-Wood
Ghostly Tales	108	Nov 73	Cover		
Ghostly Tales	110	Feb 74	Cover		
Ghostly Tales	111	Sep 74	The Thing in the Hole	6	scr-TFS; cov-Ditko
Ghostly Tales	112	Dec 74	The Treasure	15 (2 pts)	scr-Gill; cov-Boyette
Ghostly Tales	113	Feb 75	Through a Glass Darkly	7	cov (painted), scr; all-B&W
Ghostly Tales	114	Apr 75	There's Life in the Old Girl Yet!	9	scr-Gill
Ghostly Tales	115	May 75	Revenge of the Dead	6	
Ghostly Tales	122	Apr 76		2 text illos	
Ghostly Tales	123	Oct 76	Spotted Death	1	
Ghostly Tales	125	Oct 76	Wrath of the Masalai	10	scr-Keith Chapman
Ghostly Tales	127	Jan 78	The Wire Man	10	cov (fr int pans); scr-Cuti
Ghostly Tales	130	May 78	Those Fantacies!	8	cov (fr int pans); reps GT 106, 8-73
Ghostly Tales	135	May 79	A Lovely Night in Paris!	9	cov (fr int pans); reps GH 41, 11-74
Ghostly Tales	138	Sep 79	Cover		reps GT 105, 7-73
Ghostly Tales	139	Nov 79	Cover		reps GT 108, 11-73
Ghostly Tales	140	Dec 79	Revenge of the Dead	6	cov (fr int pans); reps GT 115, 5-75
Ghostly Tales	150	Aug 81	Crystal Clear	7	cov; reps GT 100, 12-72
Ghostly Tales	152	Dec 81	There's Life in the Old Girl Yet!	9	reps GT 114, 4-75
Ghostly Tales	162	Aug 83	The Hybrid Man	6	cov (fr int pans); reps GH 19, 7-74
Ghostly Tales	162	Aug 83	Spotted Death	1	reps GT 123, 10-76
Ghostly Tales	163	Oct 83	"Baku, the Dream Eater"	8	reps GH 55, 10-77
Ghostly Tales	169	Oct 84	The Devil's Lies (2 pts)	23	reps MGODG 50, 3-75
Ghost Manor	8	Nov 72	Cover		
Ghost Manor	9	Feb 73	Night of the Wanderer	9	
Ghost Manor	17	Jan 74	Cover		
Ghost Manor	18	May 74	Cover		
Ghost Manor	19	Jul 74	The Hybrid Man	6	scr-Gill
Ghost Manor	19	Jul 74	The Hybrid Man	6	Modern Comics rep 1977
Ghost Manor	23	May 75	Terrible Teddy	6	cov (painted)
Ghost Manor	25	Sep 75	Bones!	6	scr-TFS?
Ghost Manor	27	Jan 76	Cover		painted
Ghost Manor	28	Mar 76	spot illo for Ghost Office page	1	reps splash GM 25, 9-75
Ghost Manor	31	Oct 76	Headless Valley	1	
Ghost Manor	42	Mar 79	Night of the Wanderer	9	reps GM 9, 2-73
Ghost Manor	43	Jun 79	Bones!	6	scr-TFS? reps GM 25, 9-75
Ghost Manor	45	Sep 79	Honeymoon in Hell!	5	reps MT 5, 9-73
Ghost Manor	47	Nov 79	Headless Valley	1	reps GH 31, 10-76
Ghost Manor	58	Aug 81		3 text illos	
Ghost Manor	61	Feb 82	Cover		reps GH 33, 7-73
Ghost Manor	71	Nov 83	Through a Glass Darkly (all colored)	7	reps GT 113, 2-75
Ghost Manor	71	Nov 83	Cover		reps GH 38, 5-74
Ghost Manor	76	Sep 84	The Weirdest Character I've Ever Known!	7	reps GH 38, 5-74
Ghost Manor	76	Sep 84	Cover		reps ??
Haunted	10	Jan 73	Udanga's Curse	8	cov
Haunted	15	Nov 73	Cover		
Haunted	17	Jul 74	A Budding Evil	6	cov (painted); scr-TFS
Haunted	20	Feb 75	Mountain of Fear	23 (3 pts)	cov; scr-TFS
Haunted	21	Apr 75	Out of the Deep	7	scr-TFS
Haunted	22	Jun 75	Fear Has a Name!	8	scr-Cuti
Haunted	23	Sep 75	Where Is Cyrus Bull?	8	cov (painted); scr-Gill
Haunted	24	Nov 75	Cover		painted
Haunted	25	Jan 76	The Whispering Box	10	cov (painted); scr-TFS
Haunted	26	Mar 76	Cover		painted
Haunted	27	May 76	Brain Fever	8	cov (painted); scr-Mike Pellowski
Haunted	29	Sep 76	When Satan Walksa	7	
Haunted	29	Sep 76	Frantic Pursuit	3 text illos	
Haunted	29	Sep 76	They Walk Among Us!	1	
Haunted	31	Sep 77	Subway Stop	9	scr-TFS
Haunted	35	Apr 78	A Budding Evil	6	reps Haunted 17, 7-74
Haunted	36	May 78	The Night of the Demon	6	cov (fr int pan), reps MT 9, 10-74
Haunted	37	Jul 78	Everywhere there's Lisa-Anne	6	reps MT 6, 11-73
Haunted	39	Dec 78	Udanga's Curse	8	cov; reps Haunted 10, 1-73
Haunted	42	Jul 79	Cover		reps Haunted 15, 11-73
Haunted	44	Sep 79	Mountain of Fear	23 (3 pts)	reps Haunted 20, 2-75; cov; scr-TFS
Haunted	45	Oct 79	Fear Has a Name!	7	reps Haunted 22, 6-75; scr-Cuti
Haunted	52	Dec 80	Where Is Cyrus Bull?	8	reps Haunted 23, 9-75
Haunted	55	May 81	Out of the Deep	7	reps Haunted 21, 4-75; cov (fr int pan)
Haunted	56	Jul 81	Subway Stop	9	reps Haunted 31, 9-77
Haunted	57	Sep 81	The Whispering Box	10	reps Haunted 25, 1-76



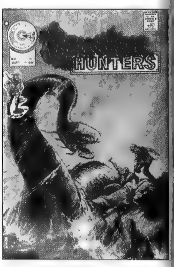
Ghostly Haunts #49, Apr 1976

Haunted #15, Nov 1973

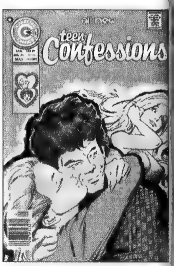
Haunted Love #11, Sept. 1975

Haunted	58	Oct 81	Brain Fever	8	reps Haunted 27, 5-76
Haunted	61	Apr 82	When Satan Walks&	7	reps Haunted 29, 9-76
Haunted	62	Jul 82	The Hairy One	9	reps CT 6, 6-76
Haunted	64	Nov 82	The Treasure	15 (2 pts)	reps GT 112, 12-74; cov GT 110, 2-74
Haunted	66	Mar 83	An Unfinished Tale	11	cov; reps MGODG 42, 10-73
Haunted	67	Apr 83	Welcome Home, Darling!	7	cov; reps MGODG 39, 6-73
Haunted	68	Jul 83	Wrath of the Nasalai	10	reps GT 123, 10-76; cov (fr int pan)
Haunted	70	Nov 83	One Last Kiss	1	scr?; reps CT 3, 12-75
Haunted	73	May 84	The Fiend in the Fog	16	reps H Love 3, 8-73 Cov; scr-Gill
Haunted	75	Sep 84	Cover		reps???
Haunted Love	1	Apr 73	A Kiss to Save Him from the Grave	16	cov; scr?
Haunted Love	1	Apr 73	A Kiss to Save Him from the Grave	16	Modern Comics rep 1978
Haunted Love	3	Aug 73	The Fiend in the Fog	16	Cov; scr-Gill
Haunted Love	5	Dec 73	Mother's Boy	8	Cov (fr spl); scr-Gill
Haunted Love	6	Oct 74	"Sleep, My Love..."	16	Cov; scr-Gill
Haunted Love	8	Mar 75		1 text illo	
Haunted Love	9	May 75		text illos	
Haunted Love	10	Jul 75	Beware—Do Not Love Him!	6	Cov (painted) (not fr sty); scr-Gill
Haunted Love	11	Sep 75	Journey to Lost Orlaak	11	cov (painted); scr-TFS
I Love You	118	Jun 76	Cover		painted
Love Diary	97	Feb 76	Cover		painted
Love Diary	99	Jun 76	Cover		painted
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	35	Dec 72	Pity Aunt Margaret!	7	
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	39	Jun 73	Welcome Home, Darling!	7	cov; scr-Gill
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	42	Oct 73	An Unfinished Tale	11	cov; scr-Gill
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	44	Jan 74	Cover		for Williamsone sty
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	45	May 74	Cover		
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	47	Sep 74	The Collector	7	scr-Gill
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	48	Nov 74	Satan's Angels	7	scr-Gill
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	49	Jan 75	The Hades Germ	7	scr-Cuti
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	50	Mar 75	The Devil's Lies	23 (2 pts)	cov; scr-Gill
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	52	Jul 75	Cover		painted; for Kim sty or MGODG 55?
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	55	Feb 76	The Monster on the Moors	9	
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	56	Apr 76	Ghostly Retribution?	3 text illos	
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	60	Dec 76	Cover		painted; for Ditko sty
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	61	Sep 77	The Hell Fire Club	22	cov (fr int splash); scr-TFS?
Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	65	Apr 78	The Tower Maiden	6	reps MT 4, 7-73
Midnight Tales	2	Feb 73	Grave Story	6	scr-TFS?
Midnight Tales	3	May 73	Lost in Transit	6	scr-Cuti
Midnight Tales	4	Jul 73	The Tower Maiden	6	scr-Cuti
Midnight Tales	5	Sep 73	Honeymoon in Hell!	5	scr-Cuti
Midnight Tales	6	Nov 73	Everywhere There's Lisa-Anne	6	scr-Cuti
Midnight Tales	7	Jan 74	Goo	6	scr-Cuti
Midnight Tales	8	Jul 74	The Kilgore Monster	6	scr-Cuti
Midnight Tales	9	Oct 74	The Night of the Demon	6	scr-Cuti
Midnight Tales	10	Dec 74	The Strange Mr. Milque	6	scr-Cuti
Midnight Tales	15	Nov 75	What's on Your Mind?	6	scr-Cuti?
Monster Hunters	1	Aug 75	Cover		painted
Monster Hunters	1	Aug 75	Cover		Modern Comics rep 1977
Monster Hunters	2	Oct 75	The Kukulkaton	10	cov (painted); scr-TFS
Monster Hunters	2	Oct 75	The Kukulkaton	10	Modern Comics rep 1977
Monster Hunters	3	Dec 75	The Wakely Monster	7	cov (painted); scr-Cuti
Monster Hunters	3	Dec 75	The Key to Hagda's Heart	2 text illos	
Monster Hunters	4	Feb 76	Cover		painted
Monster Hunters	5	Apr 76	Cover		painted
Monster Hunters	6	Jul 76	spot illo for Monster Mail page		reps pan fr MH 3, 12-75
Monster Hunters	7	Sep 76	Curse of the Leopard Man!	3 text illos	
Monster Hunters	8	Nov 76	Wormholes!	7	cov (painted); scr-Steve Clement
Monster Hunters	10	Oct 77	The Witches' Sabbat	1	(possible TFS)
Monster Hunters	16	Oct 78	The Kilgore Monster	6	cov (fr int pan); reps MT 8, 7-74
Monster Hunters	17	Dec 78	The Wakely Monster	7	cov (fr int pan); reps MH 3, 12-75
Monster Hunters	18	Feb 79	The Lonesome Bride of Carnabey Castle	4 text illos	reps BTG 3, 12-75
Prof. Coffin	20	Dec 85	Grave Story	6	scr-TFS?; reps MT 2, 2-73
Prof. Coffin	21	Feb 86	Lost in Transit	6	reps MT 3, 5-73
Scary Tales	2	Oct 75	Cover		painted
Scary Tales	3	Dec 75	Cover		painted
Scary Tales	4	Feb 76	The Eyes of the Beholders	8	cov (painted); scr-Gill
Scary Tales	9	Jan 77	Storm Freak	9	cov (painted) (for Zeck sty)
Scary Tales	13	Apr 78	Grave Story	6	reps MT 2, 2-73
Scary Tales	29	Nov 81	The Hell Fire Club	22	cov (fr int splash); reps MGODG 61, 9-77

Love Diary #99, June 1976



Monster Hunters #1 Aug 1975



Teen Confessions #94, May 1976

Scary Tales	33	Jul 82	The Well	6	reps CT 1, 7-75
Scary Tales	35	Nov 82	"Slimes, Slogs and Glumps"	6	reps CT 2, 10-75
Scary Tales	36	Jan 83	Man's Best Friend	7	reps CT 4, 2-76
Scary Tales	43	Mar 84	Cover		repri???
Scary Tales	46	Oct 84	Cover		reps cov GT 106, 8-73
Secret Romance	37	Mar 76	Cover		painted
Secrets of Young Brides	4	Jan 76	Cover		painted
Secrets of Young Brides	6	Jun 76	Cover		painted
Space War	30	Jun 78	The Anywhere Machine!	8	reps GT 107, 10-73
Space: 1999	1	Nov 75		3 text illos	scr-Cuti
Teen Confessions	94	May 76	Cover		painted
Teen Confessions	95	Jul 76	Cover		painted
Time for Love	46	Feb 76	Cover		painted
War	3	Nov 75	High Noon at 20,000 Feet	7	cov (painted)
War	14	Jun 79	Cover		reps Attack 10, 2-73
War	16	Sep 79	Cover		reps F' Army 111, 9-73
Comic Book Guide for the Artist • Writer • Letterer, 1973; rev ed. 1976					Cov & several int pans fr stories
Charlton Bullseye (CPL/Gang)	1	1975	Ghost Hosts	1	full-page illo of 5 Charlton host characters

War #3, Nov. 1975

About Tom Sutton

This information is current as of February 2004. It is by no means exhaustive!

Cartoonist PROfiles #24, Dec. 1974, "Tom Sutton," pp. 68-72, interview/profile.

Comic Book Artist #12, Mar. 2001, "Sutton's Lovecraftian Horrors," pp 62-69, interview focusing on Tom's Charlton days.

Comics Buyers Guide #1498, Aug. 2, 2002, brief obituary and repro of first Vampirella illustration.

Comics Interview #80, 1990, "Tom Sutton," pp. 32-59, interview by Stefan Petrucha with photos by J Shelby Gragg; many illustrations.

The Comics Journal #40, June 1978, "Tom Sutton, the Unknown Artist," review by Kim Thompson of Tom's recent work on *Doctor Strange* and "Seeker 3000," pp. 29-30.

The Comics Journal #181, Oct. 1995, "Face Front, True Believers! The Comics Industry Sounds Off on Stan Lee," pp. 80-92, featuring testimonials and other statements by many comics professionals, including Tom Sutton.

The Comics Journal #230, Feb 2001, in-depth, heavily illustrated interview by Gary Groth, pp. 38-99. See "trimmings" from the interview at **www.tcj.com/3_online/t_sutton.html**.

The Comics Journal #244, June 2002, obituary, pp. 22-25.

Creepy #40, July 1971 (and other Warren magazines of that date), "Warren Convention Awards," pp. 48-49, report on 1970 NY Comicon awards ceremony, with photos of Tom, Nicola Cuti, et al.; the "Ray Bradbury award" for best story went to Tom for "Snowman," *Creepy* #31.

FOOM #16, Marvel Comics, Dec. 1976, features a one-page "About the Artist" piece about Tom Sutton, as a sidebar to an article by Don McGregor about a new character he was developing with Tom, called "Dragon Shade." Interestingly, a sketch of Tom (looks to be by someone else) is included, showing the back of his head instead of his face.

Gauntlet #23, May 2002, "Fear and Loathing in New England: The Tom Sutton Story," pp. 38-62, interview/profile by Nicola Cuti, with many illustrations; two complete Charlton stories are reprinted.

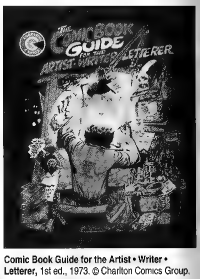
Graphic Classics, obituary & HPL illustrations, **www.graphicclassics.com/pgs/Sutton.htm**.

I'll Be Damned #1, published by Mark Feldman, 1970, features a two-page article/interview called "Fans Meet Mr. Tom Sutton," written (presumably) by Feldman.

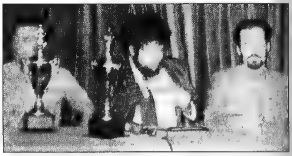
Rocket's Blast–Comicollector (RBCC) #135, April 1977, interview by Mark Burbey, pp. 6-14; many illustrations.

Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, obituary, **www.sfwa.org/News/sutton.htm**.

The Warren Companion, TwoMorrows Publishing, July 2001, "Tom Sutton's Sinister Stylings," pp. 116-117, interview focusing on Tom's Warren days.



Comic Book Guide for the Artist • Writer • Letterer, 1st ed., 1973. © Charlton Comics Group.



Frank Frazetta, Tom Sutton, Nicola Cuti at the Warren awards ceremony, NY Comicon, July 4th weekend 1970 From **Creepy** #40, July 1971, photographer unknown. © 1971, 2004 Warren Publishing.

a talk with Jose Delbo

interview conducted by **Michael Browning**

***Jose Delbo** was born in Argentina in 1933 and began his life's work as a cartoonist there as a teenager, later immigrating to the United States. He has worked for every major comic book publisher of the latter half of the 20th century. His earliest work in America was for Charlton Comics, where he primarily drew westerns, including a long run on* Billy the Kid *and all nine issues of the unique* Geronimo Jones *title (with creator-writer Tony Tallarico). Jose currently runs the Delbo Cartoon Camp every summer in his hometown of Boca Raton, Florida. For more informatton, visit* http://www.bocakidz.com/NewFiles/summercamp.html *or write to Cartoon Camp, P.O. Box 970801, Boca Raton, FL 33497. The following interview was conducted by telephone in the summer of 2000.*

Michael Browning: *When did you get started in comic books?*
Jose Delbo: I published my first comic book in South America, in Argentina, where I was born. I was sixteen years old, back fifty years ago.
MB: *What got you into comic books?*
Jose: Well, when I was a kid, I always liked to draw, and South America was reading all the American comics, like *Superman, Batman,* and those characters. And a lot of westerns, like *Red Ryder* and things like that. It got me hooked in comics. I started working as an amateur, as a beginner, doing all kinds of drawings until I met a professional artist in Argentina, one of the best ones, who started teaching me how to do comics and things like that. Later, I became his assistant. I was still a kid. When I turned sixteen, I published my first comic book over there. Actually, not my first comic book, my first story.
MB: *Who was the artist under which you trained?*
Jose: Carlos Clemen.
MB: *Did he do any work in the United States?*
Jose: No, he was very famous and he worked for almost every magazine there in South America and also in naval countries, like Brazil and Chile. He never did any work for the United States. I know that most of his work was published in naval countries like Colombia and countries like that. If I remember well, I think Al Williamson used to admire his work.
MB: *What was your first comic job here in the United States?*
Jose: My first comic work here in the United States was a job I did for Charlton. They gave me a character called Billy the Kid. I did the comic for them for several years. I don't remember how many years I did that artwork for them. [***Ed. note:** Jose's run on* Billy the Kid *was from #57 (Sept. 1966) through #110 (Dec. 1974).*]
MB: *What year did you start working for Charlton?*
Jose: When I started working for Charlton, I was doing the pencils and inks of *Billy the Kid.* What year was that? Probably 1967, 1968. I'm not so sure about that. [***Ed. note:** The year was 1965. Before* Billy, *Jose did stories for* Outlaws of the West, Black Fury, *and* Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal.]
MB: *Tell me about working for Charlton.*
Jose: Well, mostly, I started doing loose stories in other books. But my main work with Charlton was *Billy the Kid.* That was most of the work I did, then I jumped to Dell. That was the beginning for every cartoonist I know—working for Charlton [*laughs*]. I never went to Connecticut. I did it through an agent and he would give me the script and I would give him my work, because I was doing pencils and inks, and I would get a check through the mail. That was my connection with Charlton. [***Ed. note:** The agent was Tony Tallarico.*]

Jose Delbo in a recent photo, from the National Cartoonists Society Web site (*http://www.reuben.org*) Photographer unknown. © 2000 the respective copyright holder.

MB: *What editor did you work with there?*
Jose: [Dick] Giordano was the commander-in-chief in those days, and also George Wildman. The last I remember of [Wildman], he was doing some kind of Disney stuff, or some kind of humoristic stuff for Warner Brothers to be published in South America or Latin America.
MB: *Did you work for Charlton very long?*
Jose: I think I worked for them at least for three or four years, until I started doing some work for Dell Comics. [***Ed. note:** Jose's last work for Charlton appeared in* Billy the Kid *#110 (Dec. 1974).*] At Dell, I did mostly TV series, like *The Brady Bunch, Rat Patrol,* and the most important book I did for them was *The Monkees.* Remember the Monkees? The rock-and-roll group? I did a comic book—*The Monkees*—from issue number one until they canceled the book. And I did for Dell *Gentle Ben.* I did for them *The Young Lawyers, The Young Rebels, Mod Squad, Hogan's Heroes*—mostly TV series. I did that for them for a while.
MB: *Where did you go from that point?*
Jose: From there I moved to Gold Key. My first assignment with Gold Key was the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine,* the movie. I did the comic book version of *The Yellow Submarine.* Today, it's a collectible.
MB: *How did you learn to draw in the style of the movie?*
Jose: Well, they gave me a lot of pictures and they asked me if I could follow the style of that and I did. It was a lot of fun. It is an easy style to follow. For Gold Key, I did a lot of work.
MB: *You did a lot of their mystery titles.*

Jose: I did *Boris Karloff*, I did *Believe It or Not*, I did *Grimm's*, and also I did *Turok* for them. One issue. It was being done by [Alberto] Giolitti in Italy and I did one issue. I did also for them *The Lone Ranger*. I did *Buck Rogers*. I did the character that later Ernie Colon followed, *Doctor Solar*.

MB: *Were you still working for them at the end of their publishing days?*

Jose: I was working for both Gold Key and DC at the same moment. I started doing *Wonder Woman* for DC when I learned that [Gold Key] hired a new editor. I think the guy who was at Warren Publications, I don't remember his name, was supposed to be the new editor and finally they sold the company to another company. They decided to stop creating new art and they started using full art from their inventory.

MB: *What was the atmosphere like at Gold Key?*

Jose: It was very friendly. The person who I was talking with most of the time was the director of the whole company, the editor-in-chief. His name was Wally Green. He was an excellent person. We had an incredible relationship and he was fun to work for. Most of the stories I did were written by Paul S. Newman and he is in the book, *Guinness* [*Book of World Records*], as the writer who did more stories for comic books than anyone else. Most of the work I did for Gold Key, I think he was the writer. His scripts were not very complicated at all. As a person, he was a very nice person and it wasn't too difficult to illustrate what he had in mind. It was panel by panel. It wasn't a plot like Stan Lee would do. It was a full script.

MB: *What was your favorite book on which you worked?*

Jose: I've got several, several books that I liked. *The Yellow Submarine* was the one I enjoyed a lot, but coming from South America, you know, when I was a kid I was reading *The Lone Ranger*. At Gold Key, after *The Yellow Submarine*, probably *The Lone Ranger* I enjoyed doing most.

MB: *While doing* The Yellow Submarine, *did you get a chance to meet any of the Beatles?*

Jose: No, I didn't have a chance to meet the Beatles.

MB: *Did they have to give approval of the art?*

Jose: Well, I don't know that much. I remember in those days, the person who owned the copyright of the Beatles was the King Features Syndicate. I had to deal directly with Gold Key, and Gold Key would deal with the syndicate. What I remember is they showed me a preview of the movie. I went to the King Features office in New York and they had a small theater in there. I don't know if they still have it, but they showed me the movie over there and gave me all the pictures over there. It was nice.

MB: *You did a lot of licensed properties for Gold Key.*

Jose: I did a lot of *Boris Karloff*, a lot of *Grimm's* stories. Also, a lot of *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. I did also *The Twilight Zone* for them with Rod Serling. I did *UFOs* [*Flying Saucers*] for, I think, Dell Comics. In those days, it was a little confusing who was who, Dell and Gold Key. I started working for Dell. When Dell stopped doing comics, I moved to Gold Key. I started working directly for Gold Key. I did a funny character called *O.G. Whiz*, about a little kid who was the executive of a toy company. Also I did *Raggedy Ann and Andy* for Gold Key. I also did a book about Donny and Marie Osmond. I did a book about them, too. I can't remember everything I did for them, but I remember I did a lot.

MB: *Who were some of the artists you worked with at Gold Key?*

Jose: There was Jack Sparling, and Al McWilliams was an artist there, most of the guys who were working on the ghost stories. Garcia-Lopez worked over there. He did some work for the mystery books, too.

MB: *Any fond memories of working with the artists?*

Jose: I remember going to a Christmas party that Gold Key used to have. Nothing special, they used to do it there in the office. I remember meeting there McWilliams. I met there Henry Scarpelli, who was doing some stuff for them. He works now for Archie. I met Scarpelli there and we see each other occasionally when we go to parties of the National Cartoonists Society. Then [in 1995], I was the vice-president of the National Cartoonists Society. Sometimes you are so busy that you see a guy, you say, "Hello, how are you? How are you doing?" Then, at the end of everything, you go back home to meet the deadlines.

Billy fights his way down the page in **Billy the Kid** #65, Feb. 1968. © Charlton Comics Group.

MB: *Did Gold Key assign you to do certain types of stories, such as the mystery books, or did you work on a little bit of everything?*

Jose: They would give me assignments and it was up to me to accept them or not. Most of the time, I took a lot of assignments. In those days, I used to have a script hanging on my wall, waiting for me to finish and to start a new one. It was continuous work. I was very busy doing a lot of work for them.

MB: *When you worked at DC, you did a beautiful* Wonder Woman. *How did you get that job?*

Jose: Well, they called me and they offered it to me. I got a call from Joe Orlando. He put me in touch with Julius

Look out, Kid! Jose's illustration for the cover of **Billy the Kid** #109, Oct. 1974, from the original art. © Charlton Comics Group

Schwartz, and they offered to me to do the book. I think I did the book for five, six, or seven years. I don't remember how long it was. Julius Schwartz is probably the master of editors. He makes the life of the cartoonist very easy. He used to give me all the references I needed, everything. Everything was ready. All you had to do was go home and start working. You didn't need to worry about research. You didn't need to worry about nothing like that, because Julius Schwartz gave me and everybody everything you need to do the job. All the time I was telling him, I was praising him that he was the best. And it was the truth.

MB: *Do you still see any of the people with whom you used to work?*

Jose: I still see Schwartz once in a while. I don't go to conventions very often. Sometimes we get the occasion to see each other at conventions.

MB: *Did you enjoy working on* Wonder Woman*?*

Jose: It was a nice book to do, a very nice character. I worked with a lot of excellent writers like Len Wein, and I think [Marv] Wolfman did an issue and so did [Robert] Kanigher. There were a lot of very good scripts.

MB: *One of the first comics I can remember reading was a Wonder Woman story where a red-headed woman took Diana Prince's place.*

Jose: Oh, I remember that. We can see a shot of her from the back of her [on the splash page]. Vinnie Colletta was inking that. Vinnie Colletta was a funny, funny guy. He probably was the fastest inker I ever met in my life. He did good work. He could do great work. I was happy with most of the *Wonder Womans* he did. He could ink. He could make a lady look very well. He used to ink with a pen and was very fast. I had the privilege of being inked by incredible guys, like Dick Giordano, Al Williamson, Colletta, and Bob Smith. Dick Giordano and Al Williamson were top of the line.

MB: *Did you like all the inkers with whom you worked? Were you satisfied with their work?*

Jose: Sometimes the inker is in a hurry and he can erase occasionally some backgrounds or something like that. But they never change the important thing of a page, like the anatomy of people. When they are in need of meeting a deadline, they can erase a background or something like that. They never made a big change in my pencils. At Gold Key, I was doing everything myself. I only started doing only pencils when I started working for DC, piles and piles of pencil work. Every time I tried to get an inking job and I wanted to do the whole thing, they told me to "Get ahead one issue, a couple of issues, and we'll give you the whole thing." That was the catch to the situation.

MB: *Which company did you enjoy working for most?*

Jose: I had a tremendous good time working for everyone. I cannot pinpoint a company because they are different situations. Gold Key was small, intimate, more family-like. DC was a different story. I had a good relationship with Paul Levitz and I went through a bunch of editors for a while. Ross Andru was editor of *Wonder Woman* and Larry Hama, and I never had a problem with anybody. I had a good relationship with everybody.

MB: *What happened to Gold Key?*

Jose: I think a company bought Gold Key and they decided to start using inventory. I think that was the story. They stopped producing new art. After a while, they stopped doing comics. They still printed children's books and things like that. They decided to stop comics. You have to remember that in those days before the comic book shops, they probably had some problems distributing the magazines. Probably that was the

reason. I don't know if that's the case with Gold Key or not, though.

MB: *Are you still working in comics?*

Jose: I will do something where they offer me a good script. Not like I used to do, but I still do some work.

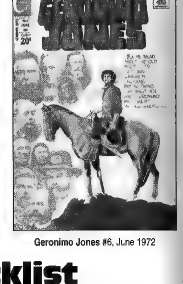
MB: *What do you think about comics these days?*

Jose: Well, let me tell you what I think. When I came to the United States, I started working for Gold Key and there were many different things that a comics artist can do, different things like westerns, mystery, science fiction, romance, you name it. Now today it's mostly superheroes and that stuff. And that makes a big difference for a guy who'd like to do something else, something more than superheroes. That's why I enjoyed working a lot for those companies, because I was switching from one thing to another. And I could do mystery and science fiction. One time, Gold Key did a book about science fiction that I enjoyed very much, I don't remember the name of the book anymore, but it was the interpretation in the shape of comics of very famous science fiction novels. [***Ed. note:*** *The series was called* Starstream, *four issues, 1976.*] I enjoyed that very much. I enjoyed when I was doing the mystery things for Gold Key, because stories used to happen in Scotland, Egypt, and that made the stories very interesting. And superheroes are superheroes. A lot of bing-boom action and that is it. When you have an opportunity to do different things, like I did also for Gold Key, like *Mighty Samson*, which was a very good book. I don't know if you remember that book, but it was about when the world was destroyed in an atomic

Billy the Kid #80, Sept. 1970

Billy the Kid #103, Aug. 1973

Geronimo Jones #1, Sept. 1971



Geronimo Jones #6, June 1972

The Jose Delbo Charlton Checklist

Compiled by Michael Ambrose, with help from Ramon Schenk; some data supplied by the Grand Comic Book Database project (*www.comics.org*). Additions & corrections welcome. All cover images © Charlton Comics Group.

Billy the Kid	57	Sep 66	Billy the Kid	88	Dec 71	Billy the Kid	143	Aug 81	Rep
Billy the Kid	58	Nov 66	Billy the Kid	89	Feb 72	Billy the Kid	144	Oct 81	Rep
Billy the Kid	59	Jan 67	Billy the Kid	90	Mar 72	Billy the Kid	145	Nov 81	Rep
Billy the Kid	60	Mar 67	Billy the Kid	91	Apr 72	Billy the Kid	146	Jan 82	Rep
Billy the Kid	61	Jun 67	Billy the Kid	92	May 72	Billy the Kid	147	Mar 82	Rep
Billy the Kid	62	Aug 67	Billy the Kid	93	Jul 72	Billy the Kid	148	Jun 82	Rep
Billy the Kid	63	Oct 67	Billy the Kid	94	Aug 72	Billy the Kid	149	Aug 82	Rep
Billy the Kid	64	Dec 67	Billy the Kid	95	Oct 72	Billy the Kid	150	Oct 82	Rep
Billy the Kid	65	Feb 68	Billy the Kid	96	Nov 72	Billy the Kid	151	Dec 82	Rep
Billy the Kid	66	May 68	Billy the Kid	97	Dec 72	Black Fury	57	? 66	
Billy the Kid	68	Sep 68	Billy the Kid	98	Jan 73	Geronimo Jones	1	Sep 71	
Billy the Kid	69	Nov 68	Billy the Kid	99	Feb 73	Geronimo Jones	2	Nov 71	
Billy the Kid	70	Jan 69	Billy the Kid	100	Mar 73	Geronimo Jones	3	Jan 72	
Billy the Kid	71	Mar 69	Billy the Kid	101	May 73	Geronimo Jones	4	Mar 72	
Billy the Kid	72	May 69	Billy the Kid	102	Jun 73	Geronimo Jones	5	Apr 72	
Billy the Kid	73	Jul 69	Billy the Kid	103	Aug 73	Geronimo Jones	6	Jun 72	
Billy the Kid	74	Sep 69	Billy the Kid	104	Sep 73	Geronimo Jones	7	Aug 72	
Billy the Kid	75	Nov 69	Billy the Kid	105	Nov 73	Geronimo Jones	7	Modern Comics rep 1978	
Billy the Kid	77	Mar 70	Billy the Kid	106	Dec 73	Geronimo Jones	8	Dec 72	
Billy the Kid	78	May 70	Billy the Kid	107	May 74	Geronimo Jones	9	Jan 73	
Billy the Kid	79	Jul 70	Billy the Kid	108	Jul 74	Ghostly Tales	77	Dec 69	
Billy the Kid	80	Sep 70	Billy the Kid	109	Oct 74	Gunmaster	89	Oct 67	
Billy the Kid	81	Nov 70	Billy the Kid	109	Modern Comics rep 1977	Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	24	Feb 71	
Billy the Kid	82	Jan 71	Billy the Kid	110	Dec 74 last Delbo BTK	Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves	38	May 73	
Billy the Kid	83	Mar 71	Billy the Kid	132	Nov 79 Rep	Outlaws of the West	57	Jan 66	
Billy the Kid	84	May 71	Billy the Kid	134	Feb 80 Rep	Scary Tales	44	May 84 Rep	
Billy the Kid	85	Jul 71	Billy the Kid	140	Feb 81 Rep	Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal	62	Feb-Mar 66	
Billy the Kid	86	Sep 71	Billy the Kid	141	Apr 81 Rep	Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal	63	Apr-May 66	
Billy the Kid	87	Nov 71	Billy the Kid	142	Jun 81 Rep				

holocaust. Samson and a couple other people survived. I took it after a very important guy, but for me, it was fun. Unfortunately, the main problem was distribution. The whole thing started to slow down and so many companies disappeared.

MB: *Do you teach art these days?*

Jose: Well, I was teaching for about thirteen or fourteen or fifteen years with the Joe Kubert School in New Jersey. Now I am the owner and director of a cartoon camp here in Florida, where I live, in Boca Raton. That is what I'm doing mostly with my time, especially during the summer, teaching young kids how to draw. It's important when you see a kid who enjoys to draw and you see him learning. It's very nice. It's a very good experience.

MB: *Did the other Gold Key artists go to other companies when Gold Key quit buying new art?*

Jose: They did like I did—they moved to some other companies. The two main companies after Gold Key stopped publishing comics was DC and Marvel. For Marvel I did *Transformers, Thundercats, NFL Superpro, Brute Force, Captain Planet and the Planeteers.* When I started working for Marvel, the editor-in-chief was Jim Shooter. My first editor is the guy who is in charge of the whole superheroes in DC comics now, Mike Carlin. I did some work for Acclaim, *The Armorines.* For Acclaim, I did the minibooks of Disney. I did *101 Dalmatians, The Mighty Ducks.*

MB: *Did you do any work for Valiant before it became Acclaim?*

Jose: I did one issue and I think that it still was Valiant. I did *Shadowman.* Jim Shooter still was the boss.

MB: *Did you like working with Shooter?*

Jose: Oh, yes.

MB: *He's had some problems staying with a company after his long stint as editor-in-chief at Marvel.*

Jose: Well, it's a general problem of the business. Only big companies can survive. You've got DC and it can survive because it's a big company.

MB: *During your time working at Marvel, DC, Charlton, and Gold Key, did you ever get to work with Jack Kirby or Steve Ditko?*

Jose: No, they were before I came here to the States. I know that when I was working for DC, they brought Jack Kirby in under contract to work with DC from Marvel, but I never had the chance to work with Jack Kirby.

MB: *What other books did you do for DC besides* Wonder Woman*?*

Jose: I did for DC the *World's Finest.* When I was doing *Wonder Woman,* I did almost every character that you can imagine in a DC comic with the exception of the Flash, doing loose pages of Batgirl, Supergirl, Justice League. I did also Superman in *World's Finest.* Also, I was busy doing the daily strip for the newspapers, *Superman.* In that, Paul Kupperberg was the writer and the editor was Joey Cavalieri and the inker was Bob Smith.

MB: *Did you get back all your originals from Gold Key and the other companies for which you worked?*

Jose: No, I got only a few pages from Gold Key. In those days, the guys didn't used to give back the originals. From Dell, I've got only a few originals. Now, from DC and Marvel, I've got the proportion that a penciler gets from the book, like 70 percent for the guy who does the pencils. I've got probably in my home like three thousand or more originals. I don't sell my originals.

MB: *I saw some of your Gold Key mystery books pages for sale on eBay recently.*

Jose: Oh yeah? I don't know who could have those pages. Those pages, I did the pencils and the inks on those. I don't know how someone could have them if I don't have them. Oh boy! Probably, somebody was taking pages from Gold Key. In those days, I used to do pencils and inks, so if someone were to have those pages, it would be me. For you to see them on eBay, it's a surprise for me.

MB: *Did Gold Key keep the pages?*

Jose: Someone told me Gold Key shredded the pages. But, I'm not so sure about that. Someone told me that.

MB: *You're still keeping active in comics?*

Jose: I'm trying. I'm trying.

MB: *How old are you?*

Jose: You want to know? I'm old like Methusalah. I'm 66 years old. It's old enough! [*laughs*]

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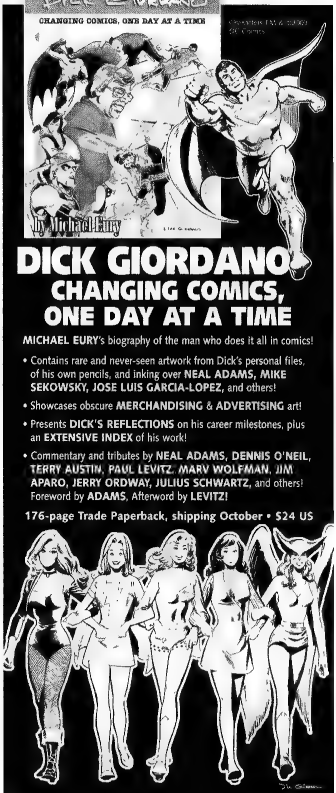

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Henry Scarpelli

a look back at his Charlton days

interview conducted by **Ramon Schenk**

HENRY SCARPELLI *worked for Charlton Comics from about 1967 to 1969. Drawn in by then-Charlton editor Dick Giordano from DC, Henry saw the Derby, Connecticut, company as "just another egg in the basket," a way of putting food on the table. Notable Scarpelli Charlton work includes "Sinistro, Boy Fiend"* (Charlton Premiere #3, *Jan. 1968) and regular appearances in* Go-Go; *he also enjoyed a seven-issue run on* Abbott and Costello. *Henry has won two Shazam awards and a National Cartoonists Society nomination (for outstanding comic book humor) and is a member of the Comic Art Professional Society. He currently draws the daily and Sunday* Archie *syndicated newspaper strip (with writer Craig Boldman) and is a regular inker of monthly Archie Comics stories. Here, Henry outlines his decades-spanning career in his own words, starting at the very beginning.*

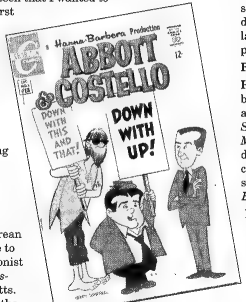
A recent self-caricature by Henry. © 2004 Henry Scarpelli.

RS: *How did you start out as an artist?*

Henry: As a youngster on Staten Island, New York. I was enamoured with comic strips, particularly *Little Orphan Annie*. I would copy the strip (drawing it in the same size as it appeared in the New York *Daily News*). I was hooked. I knew as an early preteen that I wanted to be a cartoonist. My first opportunity to show my wares was as a contributor to my high school paper.

After high school, I enlisted in the army, first assigned to the signal corps and eventually finding a spot as an artist in the training aids department. (Sometimes doing strategic maps of troop movements during the Korean War.) I was soon able to contribute as a cartoonist to the *Fort Devens Dispatch* in Massachusetts. After discharge from the army I attended the Cartoonist and Illustrators School of Visual Arts in New York City.

My focus was realistic art and I had drawn up some adventure comic book pages when I saw a notice on the school bulletin board for a letterer needed for a small comic publisher. My sample comic book pages served as my portfolio since I had lettered them, too. The editor became interested in my art and instead hired me as an artist. My first professional job was a weekly color comic page of a feature called *Bruce Gentry* (a similar character and art technique as Milton Caniff's *Steve Canyon*). The publisher had a contract to produce a color comic supplement for weekly newspapers across the nation. That lasted a year or so.



Abbott & Costello #1, Feb 1968
© Charlton Comics Group.

After art school, I joined a newspaper syndicate, General Features, in the art department. After a few years, the syndicate gave me the opportunity to create my own feature. I did, and it was called *TV Tee-Hees*, a single-panel cartoon lampooning the TV industry and those who watched it. At its peak it appeared in 150 newspapers nationally.

RS: *When did you break into comic books?*

Henry: When I left the syndicate, my first venture into comic books was with Dell Publishing, doing TV-themed books such as *The Andy Griffith Show*, *Beverly Hillbillies*, *Bewitched*, *Get Smart*, *Petticoat Junction*, *Flying Nun*, *Hogan's Heroes*, *McHale's Navy*, *Ensign Pulver*, *Daktari*, and *Gentle Ben*. All done in a semistraight and straight style of art. I also did comic book versions of the movies [Dell's *Movie Classics* series] of *McHale's Navy* [#12-500-412, Oct.-Dec. 1964] and *Ensign Pulver* [#12-257-410, Aug.-Oct. 1964].

RS: *Who was your editor at Dell?*

Henry: Don Arneson.

RS: *Did you have to get likeness approvals?*

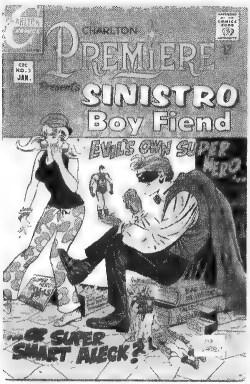
Henry: They gave me stills from the shows and they trusted my likenesses. I soon drifted over to DC, doing the art for teen titles such as *Swing with Scooter*. Then I was

assigned to ink some *Batman* and *Wonder Woman*. I particularly enjoyed inking Bob Oksner's *Adventures of Jerry Lewis*.

RS: *How did your first Charlton work come about?*

Henry: While I was still working at DC, Charlton editor Dick Giordano hired me to do "Sinistro, Boy Fiend." He handed me a script and gave me instructions to create the likenesses for all the characters, including Sinistro. I should tell you, of anything I've ever done for Charlton, "Sinistro" was my favorite and most satisfying piece of work.

When Sal Gentile became editor, he sought me out to do more Charlton work. I worked directly with Dick Giordano, then Sal Gentile, but I never visited the Charlton offices or plant. The best I remember doing were a couple of stories, "The Rotting Stumps" (a satire of the Rolling Stones) and "Return to Peculiar Place" (a satire of the TV soap *Peyton Place*) for a comic book titled *Go-Go*. Of course I did the *Abbott and Costello* books with Steve Skeates.



Charlton Premiere #3, Jan. 1968, the first (and last) appearance of Sinistro, Boy Fiend. © Charlton Comics Group.

RS: *Did Steve give you full scripts, or did you work "Marvel" style?*

Henry: I worked from full scripts. I enjoyed doing them. Steve did a wonderful writing job.

RS: *How did you turn in your pages?*

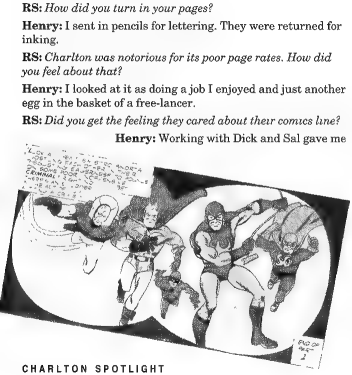
Henry: I sent in pencils for lettering. They were returned for inking.

RS: *Charlton was notorious for its poor page rates. How did you feel about that?*

Henry: I looked at it as doing a job I enjoyed and just another egg in the basket of a free-lancer.

RS: *Did you get the feeling they cared about their comics line?*

Henry: Working with Dick and Sal gave me the impression of complete professionalism.



RS: *Were you allowed to sign your work?*

Henry: I always signed my work anywhere I was allowed. It kind of annoyed me when some art was anonymous and I wanted to know the name of the artist.

When DC dropped their teen titles, it seemed only natural I migrate to Archie Comics, the king publisher of the teen comic world. And you know that story. Inking is mostly what I do, presently doing the *Betty and Veronica* book and at the board doing the complete art for the *Archie* syndicated newspaper feature.

© 2004 Ramon Schenk

Betcha didn't know that Henry ever drew any of the Charlton action-heroes, did ja? Above and lower left from **Charlton Premiere** #3 © Charlton Comics Group.

The **Henry Scarpelli** Charlton Checklist

Compiled by Michael Ambrose; some data supplied by Gary Usher & Steve Skeates. Note: all Abbott & Costello scripts by Steve Skeates. Some unsigned A&C stories after #7 may be Scarpelli art. This list is obviously incomplete; additions & corrections welcome.

Abbott & Costello 1, Feb 68
Cover / Smear Tactics 13p / Deep in the Heart of Campus 9p / Rich Man, Poor Man 5p

Abbott & Costello 2, May 68
Cover / Miss Understanding 1p / How Secret Is My Agent? 9p / The Private World of Sleuth Shamus 8p
Jefferson Blimp—His Cause and Cure! 6p / Hero Today 4p / Strike 1p

Abbott & Costello 3, Jul 68
Cover / War Games 1p / The Sound of House (A Musical Tragedy) 4p / Abstraction 1 1p / Hard Over Mayhem 6p / Captain Costello 11p / Abstraction 2 1p / The Last Village 3p / Abstraction 3 1p /
Abbott & Costello Pin-up Poster 1p / Knock-Knock 1p

Abbott & Costello 4, Sep 68
Cover / Nearly Perfect 8p / There's No Business... 6p / Flowers of the Business World 4p / Growth (pt 1) 1p / Way of All Fish 9p / Growth (pt 2) 1p / When the Swallows Come Back 6p / Ask Any Lamp 2p / Growth (pt 3) 1p / My Fellow Americans! 1p / Big Finish 1p

Abbott & Costello 5, Nov 68
Cover / Whirligig 7p / The Mystery of the Missing Uncle 4p / Ask a Silly Question! 1p / One Foot in the Park 5p / Never-Never Mind 5p / Something or Other 1p

Abbott & Costello 6, Jan 69 (cover & all A&C stories)

Abbott & Costello 7, Mar 69
Cover / Captain Costello Meets Whirligig 10p (inks-Anthony Fernin)

Charlton Premiere 3, Jan 68 (Sinistro, Boy Fiend)
Cover / Too Many Happy Endings! (pt 1) 9p / Sinistro and the Supergoys! (pt 2) 9p / Sinistro's Evil Triumph! (pt 3) 9p

Go-Go (issues unknown) Return to Peculiar Place, Rotting Stumps stories—unidentified

Ron Frantz

Charlton Memories

OR

A funny thing happened on the way to the comic book rack . . .

What a blessed thing it is, that Nature, when she invented, manufactured, and patented her authors, contrived to make critics out of the chips that were left! Painful as the task is, they never fail to warn the author, in the most impressive manner, of the probabilities of failure in what he has undertaken. Sad as the necessity is to their delicate sensibilities, they never hesitate . . . to press upon him the propriety of retiring before he sinks into imbecility.

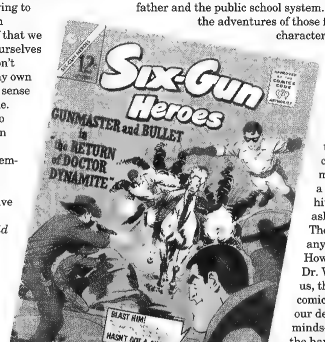
—Oliver Wendell Holmes
The Professor At The Breakfast-Table

SOME OF US who write about ancient history (or old comic books) have an unfortunate tendency to ramble on incessantly about topics we enjoy. It is as if we become oblivious to what others might think. Trying to understand the motives that prompt such eccentric behavior, I've come to the belief that we must experience difficulty in detaching ourselves from the topic. Lord only knows why. I don't know how it is with anyone else, but in my own particular instance, I never did have any sense and it's too late now to go looking for some. This being as it may, I can only ask you to bear with me as we stroll once again down memory lane in search of lost treasure.

Someone once asked me if I could remember the first Charlton comic I ever read. Nope, I can't say that I do, although I certainly wish I did. I imagine it could have been one of the humor titles published in the early 1960s, such as *Timmy, the Timid Ghost* or *Li'l Genius*, but I can't say for sure. However, I do remember the first Charlton comic I bought with my own money. Since inquiring minds want to know these things, it was an issue of *Six-Gun Heroes*, featuring Gunmaster by writer Joe Gill and artist Pete Morisi. This might readily explain why I've always had a soft spot for the character, although I've yet to meet anyone else who shares the affliction.

The title of the feature story was "The Return of Doctor Dynamite" or some such thing. I would like to be more specific, but I haven't seen the issue for at least twenty years. By my recollection, it would have been about 1964, making me ten years old at the time. I've often wondered why anyone (including me) would remember a particular comic book out of hundreds they read as a child. For whatever reason, I recall buying the issue at a neighborhood grocery store. The selection in that establishment was usually pretty sparse so it was a matter of taking whatever was available. Being a persnickety child, I usually didn't read westerns. My guess is that it was the closest thing to a "superhero" comic book I could find.

The mid-1960s was a wonderful time to be an aficionado of superhero comics. The selection was just marvelous. If you happened to be under the age of twelve at the time, so much the better. There were dozens of titles to choose from. For a time I read almost nothing else, much to the chagrin of my father and the public school system. I remember thrilling to the adventures of those fantastic long-underwear characters, bounding from panel to panel, thrashing villains, and saving civilization from the ravages of refinement and good taste.



Here it is, Ron! **Six-Gun Heroes** #80, Sept 1964. © Charlton Comics Group.

Looking back at all that four-color splendor through now-jaded eyes, I can't help but notice that most of the stories had but a single vapid narrative: hit, hit, hit. Were, you might ask, the stories too violent? They were, indeed, should any cynic care to doubt it. However, regardless of what Dr. Wertham might have told us, the reading of superhero comic books did little to warp our delicate, sensitive juvenile minds—at least no more than the harm we sustained from watching *The Adventures of Mighty Mouse* or *The Three Stooges* on television. Children are made of sterner stuff, although I continue to be somewhat suspicious about the emotional stability of most adults.

By 1965, almost every comic book publisher in the business was flooding the comic book racks with similar fare. You probably know the names of the culprits as well as I do. They included Marvel, DC, Gold Key, ACG, Tower, Dell, Archie, and even that bastion of wholesome children's literature, Harvey Comics. Then, far off near the foothills of Derby, Connecticut, Charlton decided to toss its hat into the ring and publish a few superhero titles of its own (which were presented as "action-heroes," in an attempt to distinguish themselves from the more prominent competition). It came as no great surprise, as nothing breeds imitation quite so well as success. The management at Charlton was not stupid. Superhero comic books were selling! They could smell the coins rattling around in kids' pockets and wanted a piece of the action.

Most of Charlton's early entries into the superhero derby were something less than memorable. The early issues of *Blue Beetle* and *Son of Vulcan*, for example, were so lackluster that they had a certain endearing charm about them. Actually, it's all easy enough to understand. Joe Gill earned a modest living hacking out scripts at a pace that might have killed a lesser man. Tony Tallarico's art was, if nothing else, competent. I admit I didn't care much for Tallarico's style at the time, but I've since learned to appreciate its unique qualities. Some of it, if you care to look at some of the other things he drew, is really quite good.

Then came the team of Bill Montes and Ernie Bache, who illustrated the thrill-packed adventures of the *Fightin' Five*. It's hard to find any Charlton comic of the period that didn't contain at least one story by the pair. They must have been turning out pages by the hundred. Some of the work was better than others, but considering the paltry rates Charlton paid for art (and everything else), the fact any of it had any redeeming quality is nothing short of miraculous.

Much the same can be said about Joe Gill, who held a tight reign on the writing chores at Charlton. Gill was quite capable of turning out superior work, though he was seldom afforded the opportunity. He produced an average of one comic book per day, leaving little time for spit and polish. Gill cranked out pages at a speed that staggers the imagination, pounding the typewriter keys until his fingers bled. Occasionally, Gill suffered from a lapse a memory. He would forget the names of characters from one page to the next. John Smith might change to Bill Brown, perplexing hapless artists who had no choice but to figure out what Gill had done and make the necessary correction.

I MUST CONFESS that I didn't pay much attention to Charlton's first action-hero titles. Frankly, there was too much product available and my meager allowance stretched only so far. Marvel Comics, who had been my early favorite, usually got the lion's share of my pocket money, with all the other publishers receiving whatever pittance was left over. Most of the Charlton comics in my collection came from trades or were picked up at second-hand bookstores for five cents each.

All of this began to change during the summer of 1965. I started buying the new issues of Captain Atom (in *Strange Suspense Stories*) drawn by Steve Ditko. I had been a big fan of Ditko's work at Marvel, so it mattered little to me that the stories were reprints. Then things really started to get interesting at Charlton. This seemed to coincide with Dick Giordano's taking over the editorial chores from Pat Masulli. New titles began to appear that were big improvements over the old ones. By my way of thinking, many of them were every bit as good as anything published by Marvel. I remember buying the first issues of *Judomaster* by Frank McLaughlin and *Thunderbolt* by a man of mystery known as PAM. It would be almost a decade before I learned his true identity,

A nice Tony Tallarico panel from Dell's **Ensign Pulver** (Movie Classics #12-257-410, Aug.-Oct. 1964), from a copy of the original art, courtesy of Ron. © the respective copyright holder.

ENSIGN PULVER - PAGE(11)

ENSIGN PULVER F/P17

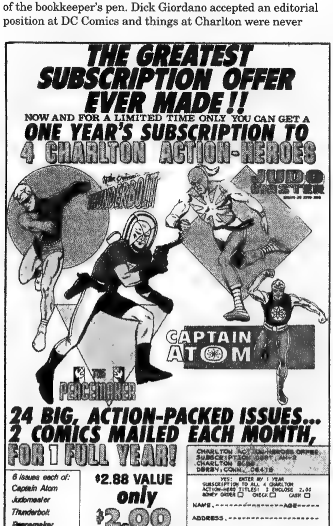
LATER, THAT NIGHT...
SIR, THE LATEST REPORT SAYS THE HURRICANE CHANGED COURSE! IT WILL HIT THIS AREA IN TWO HOURS! WE'D BETTER STAY PUT--
DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO! THE ADMIRAL WANTS US AT APATHY ISLAND AND WE'RE GOING TO BE THERE ON TIME, HURRICANE OR NO HURRICANE! WE SAIL!

but more about that later.

By 1966, the new Charlton action-hero line was going full steam. *Judomaster* and *Thunderbolt* were soon joined by *The Peacemaker* by Pat Boyette and Ditko's revamped version of *Blue Beetle*. I continued to buy *Sarge Steel* by Dick Giordano and *Fightin' Five* for as long as they lasted. For about two years, I was in comic book heaven. By some great miracle, some of the original issues I bought new off the stands have remained with me all these years, including a bound volume of *Judomaster* that continues to adorn my bookshelf.

It's curious how certain events stand out in memory. I vividly remember one fine day in March of 1967. While walking home with the new issue of *Judomaster* (#95) that I had just purchased, I felt a sudden, stabbing pain in the pit of my stomach. I doubled over and fell to the ground, feeling as if I had been kicked by a mule. Next came a quick trip to the family doctor, who diagnosed my condition as acute appendicitis. I ended up reading that issue of *Judomaster* in a hospital bed while awaiting surgery. To this very day, I get an uncomfortable sensation every time I see that particular issue. Understandably, it is my least favorite of the series.

Sadly, all good things must come to an end. It's been said that Charlton's action-hero titles never sold well, although there seems to be some debate on the subject. Without warning, they were all discontinued with one decisive stroke of the bookkeeper's pen. Dick Giordano accepted an editorial position at DC Comics and things at Charlton were never again the same. A line of ghost stories replaced the action-heroes, and life moved on.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Near the end of their run, Charlton offered a subscription package for all the action-hero titles. The advertising hype in the full-page ad was as quaint as the characters themselves. It seemed like a great bargain, so I stuffed two crisp new dollar bills into an envelope and mailed it to Charlton. I sat back, gloated over my good fortune, and waited for the first issues to arrive. For a time all was well and fine, excluding the fact that the local mail carrier had the habit of folding the mailing envelope in half and cramming it into the mailbox. No doubt it was the same fathead who demolished my membership package from the Merry Marvel Marching Society a year earlier. You know, I still have the same kind of problems with the post office. Some things never change.

As I recall, I received about half of the promised issues, usually a week or two before they went on sale locally. Then, without notice, Charlton discontinued all its action-hero titles. Needless to say, no one at Charlton seemed particularly interested in refunding the unused part of my subscription. I remember writing one letter of complaint, which apparently was filed for away for future reference in the nearest trash can. For me it one of those early object lessons about how ethics and business often make strange bedfellows. It seemed to me that someone in a position of management at Charlton was not the most honorable of God's creatures. Having a suspicious nature, I figured my hard-earned buck had disappeared into the pocket of some accountant or possibly even the owner himself. There is little reason to doubt it. Oh well; I figured someone must have needed the money more than I did.

Years later, while having dinner with Dick Giordano at a steakhouse in Oklahoma City, I couldn't resist the temptation to jokingly "complain" about Charlton not refunding my money a decade earlier. Strangely, I think Giordano actually felt bad about it. He assured me that it had to have been an "oversight" because Charlton was a fine, family-owned company and everyone who worked there was honest as the day is long. We both had a good laugh about that!

The demise of the Charlton action-hero line probably all worked out just as well for me. By 1968 my interest in comic books had begun to wane. The explanation is very simple: There comes a time in the life of a young man when a fascination with members of the opposite sex takes priority over almost everything else. For several years, I had very little interest in comic books. Most of my waking hours (and every nickel I could lay my hands on) were spent in the pursuit of wine, women, and song.

Our story now leaps forward a decade. I've since married and become preoccupied with the usual domestic responsibilities. This included that sordid matter of earning a living. My wife is expecting a child. A reasonably tolerant woman, she doesn't mind if I pursue avocational activities. She probably figured it kept me home most evenings and away from the influence of that riffraff hanging around the pool hall. A few years earlier I had returned to my childhood hobby of collecting old comic books. With a more discerning eye, I had developed an interest in the history of the magazines and the people who created them. In December 1977 I had the pleasure of meeting artist Alex Toth at a convention. I had no way of knowing that this chance meeting would pave the way for almost two decades of association with a stalwart group of artists and writers formerly employed by the Charlton Comics Group.

I didn't realize at the time that I was rubbing shoulders with a legend. Like almost every other comic book fan, I had heard of Toth, but I'll admit to having been ignorant about much of his career. Believe it or not, my first real introduction to Toth's work came with the publication of the fifth issue of *Charlton Bullseye* (the fanzine), published about a year earlier. When I asked Toth to autograph the magazine, he looked at it with a twinkle in his eye and said: "This isn't the best work I've ever done, is it?" I didn't have the heart to tell him that I had seen so little of his work that I was really in no position to judge one way or the other. I genuinely liked the story and that was all that mattered to me.

When I asked Toth how the story came to be, he answered: "I had drawn a story or two for Charlton when *Bullseye* publisher Bob Layton asked if I would be interested in illustrating a new Question story. As a courtesy, I suggested that he mail me a script and I would give it a look. Much to my surprise, the script wasn't bad. The more I looked it over, the better I liked it. I had a little spare time on my hands, so I agreed to do it. I wasn't comfortable with Layton's request that I draw it as closely as possible in Ditko's style, but we managed to work around that." I don't remember all of the particulars of the conversation now (after all, this was over twenty-five years ago), but I do remember Toth telling me that he had fun doing the job. This might explain why he penciled, inked, and lettered the story at considerably less than his usual rates.

Toth seemed to take a liking to my wife and me and we spent a lot of time in the hotel bar, shooting the breeze and having a good time. Somewhere in the process we became friends. After the convention Toth and I corresponded for a while. Among other things, I discovered that we shared an interest in artist Ogden Whitney. In the midst of our correspondence I mentioned the names of several other artists whose work I enjoyed, asking if he knew any of them. It just so happened that he did. On a handwritten postcard, dated February 13, 1978, Toth replied:

> Re: "PAM"; his name is Peter A. Morisi (and a high school chum of mine, circa 1943-46). I wrote him to send me one of his Charlton originals for you, if he had one. He did. So soon, I'll send it off to you! I'm delayed by heavy loads of "moonlighting" free lance work, so please be patient. I'll get it to you! Meanwhile, you may want to write personally and express your feelings about his work directly.
>
> I'm certain Pete would enjoy your comments about his worthy art. He's a nice guy and modest about his creations. You can feel free to give my name, as having referred you to him, and that I'm so damned slow in delivering his original to you. I apologize to him—and you! Best to you both!

Wasting no time, I wrote Morisi a long letter, filled with praise for his artwork (which I had admired for over a decade) and questions about his prolific comic book career. As unaccustomed as he might have been to that kind of fan interest, Morisi responded with the following letter, answering my questions with patience and gentle good humor. Morisi had a habit of not dating his handwritten letters, but if memory serves, this one was written in late March or early April 1978.

> Many thanks for your letter and the kind interest you've taken in my work. The original I sent to Alex (which he in turn sent to you) is from *Haunted* #11, Feb. 1973, "The Hunt For Clovis Dobbs." It's one of the few originals that Charlton let me have back before they invoked a "no return" policy. As a result of that, I've had to refuse other fans similar requests, with the above explanation—although I don't think anybody believed me.
>
> Now, to try and answer your questions in detail would take all day, so I'll give it to you fast and furious. Hang on: Attended the school of industrial arts with a budding genius named Toth. Quit, went into the army, was discharged and went to Hogarth's school on the G.I. bill. Held minor art jobs (assistant to Coulton Waugh, Mike Roy and John Belfi, inking for Marvel). Finally did my first complete job for Fox Features, a lousy company that went bankrupt a year or so later—but that's where I learned the "basics" of comics. After that, it was Marvel, St. Johns, Quality, Standard, Biro, Fiction House, etc., and Comic Media where I created "Johnny Dynamite," a one-eyed (patch) private eye (a la Mike Hammer) that lasted 8 or 9 issues. Tired yet? I am!

This early, developmental drawing of Thunderbolt probably appeared in an issue of Glen Johnson's **The Comic Reader**. Note that T-Bolt here sports a sidearm. From a photocopy, courtesy of Ron. Thunderbolt TM & © 2004 Estate of Peter A. Morisi.

In 1956 Charlton called me and asked me to do some work for them. That call was good for twenty years, a la: Billy the Kid, Lash LaRue, Wyatt Earp, Gunmaster, Kid Montana, romance, war, Dr. Graves, etc., Thunderbolt and Vengeance Squad.

Re: Thunderbolt. That was quite a challenge. When Charlton finally said "OK" (to my request of years standing) to let me do a costume hero, they dumped the thing in my lap with a "one issue only provision," to see "how it goes." Well, I worked on T-Bolt night and day, straining to come up with something different—and yet—something real. Costumes, characters, plots, locals, artwork—all put me through a tough, hard grind—that I loved. But after 8 or 9 issues it caught up to me. I couldn't put Dick Giordano through any more last minute deadlines, so I asked out of the strip—much to my regret. I miss T-Bolt.

Another early drawing of T-Bolt, original appearance unknown. From a photocopy, courtesy of Ron. Thunderbolt TM & © 2004 Estate of Peter A. Morisi.

In December of 1978, my wife and I had the pleasure of visiting Morisi at his home in New York. We had a wonderful visit. I remember Morisi telling the story of how he was supposed to have been the artist on Charlton's revival of the Blue Beetle in 1964. I am sure it would have been fascinating. I am a little sketchy now on the details, but as I recall some problem cropped up at the last minute and Morisi was unable to do the job. Pat Masulli then passed the assignment along to Tony Tallarico. I can't help but wonder how history might have differed had Morisi been able to draw that first story.

Then there was a delightful account of his school days with Alex Toth. As the story goes, Morisi was a fun-loving youngster with a bit of an impish streak. Toth, on the other hand, was too serious for such a tender age. He had not developed much of a sense of humor. Naturally, they didn't always get along. Morisi sat directly behind Toth in the classroom and would do silly things like push Toth's chair forward with his foot, or bump his elbow while he was drawing something. This sort of thing really annoyed Toth and they almost came to blows on a few occasions. It was the typical "meet me after school and I'll punch you in the nose" kind of thing. A few years later, I heard Toth's version of the story, which was very close to the same. I remember kidding him to the tune of: "After all that bickering, it's a wonder you guys are still friends."

Re: Vengeance Squad. I thought this would be a winner. Joe Gill, who created and wrote the strip, is a damn good writer—when he has the time. However, his schedule was such that he didn't (or couldn't) allow himself time to build or nurse the strip properly. Yet even with that drawback, the book was catching on when Charlton called it quits. As for what I am doing now—the answer is simple. Nothing!

Charlton is at a stand-still, reprinting stuff I did ten years ago.

Marvel doesn't fit my style—or is it the other way around?

DC placed too many do's and don'ts on my stuff as a condition of employment. Warren is not my thing. So that leaves me out in the cold—for awhile at least.

My only regret is that I never kept carbon copies of any of my letters to Toth, Morisi, or anyone else. At the time it didn't seem important. The thought that any of this might one day have some historical significance never once occurred to me. I was just having fun. However, Morisi's first letter whet my appetite for more of the same. I wrote again a few days later, asking still more questions. I suspect by this time he must have felt like a contestant on a radio quiz show. In particular, I grilled him persistently about my old favorite, Thunderbolt.

Thanks once again for your interest in my work. Your breakdown of the T-Bolt strip picked out all the elements that make it tick. Peter Cannon, Tabu, The Hooded One, all old friends that I miss having around.

Thunderbolt in many respects was a unique character. I always enjoyed the fact that he was a reluctant hero. There was none of the typical superhero nonsense as in the case of Superman, who with little or no provocation would leap out the nearest window and chase a fire truck. Thunderbolt was, to my mind, a tad more realistic. He only ventured out in costume to battle the forces of evil when there was a legitimate crisis to deal with. More often than not, he had to be talked into action by his companion, Tabu. The scenario reminds me of the early half-hour television episodes of

A pair of unfinished panels from an (unpublished?) Pete Morisi Johnny Dynamite story. From a photocopy, courtesy of Ron Frantz. Art © 2004 Estate of Peter A. Morisi. Johnny Dynamite TM & © 2004 Max Allan Collins & Terry Beatty

Gunsmoke. Matt Dillon was a headstrong young U. S. marshal, frequently gripped by indecision. His gimpy deputy, Chester, acted as Matt's conscience, prompting him into doing the right thing, usually just in the nick of time. It was much the same type of relationship with Thunderbolt and Tabu.

ABOUT A YEAR EARLIER, I had picked up one of the old *Johnny Dynamite* comics at a convention. It seems like the issue had been drawn my someone else, perhaps Don Heck. I was fascinated to learn that Morisi had more or less created the character and I wanted to know more about it. I had not yet read Mickey Spillane, although that situation would soon change.

> Johnny Dynamite evolved from an adventure-type comic book that wasn't selling. The book was called *Dynamite*, and due to some postal regulations the publisher (Allen Hardy) had to continue with that title. He wanted to revamp it badly and asked me for suggestions. I said: Well, Mickey Spillane and his "Mike Hammer" pocket books are the rage right now. Why not go with the trend in a comic book called Johnny Dynamite? He agreed, and the book did quite well for about 8 or 9 issues until Hardy ran into trouble with his other titles—and went out of business. Don't knock yourself out looking for old Dynamite issues. The artwork (with the exception of maybe three issues) was pretty sad (thirty years ago). I wrote most of the stories—and like Spillane's stuff—they were violent, rough, and gutsy. Pre-code days.
>
> No, I don't think I wrote any Gunmaster stories, but I do remember writing quite a few Kid Montana things. Enjoyed doing them, but I'm too fussy as a writer. If a story doesn't feel right to me, I'll do it over and over. Makes me feel better but doesn't pay the bills.

Here it is now a quarter-century later. I am about the same age now that Morisi was when we first began corresponding. I can relate to his problem of being a "fussy writer." It seems that over the years I seem to have developed the same trouble. It takes me forever to write anything I consider worth printing, and I rewrite an article to the point of redundancy. I've found that having a good editor to take off the rough edges certainly helps. When I finally see an article in print, the first thing I want to do is take a blue pencil to it. If I had to write for a living I would probably starve to death.

Way back in 1966, I would have given a month's allowance to learn PAM's true identity. I can't begin to explain why, but somehow it was important to me. It was a real pleasure to hear the true story from the man himself. In those days, this information was not a matter of common knowledge.

> The PAM thing started like so: When I was working on the first T-Bolt story, Pat Masulli asked (insisted) that I sign it, to go along with the "credit" trend started by Stan Lee. I was involved in another line of work at the time (in addition to T-Bolt) and wasn't allowed any outside signatures. So I used the PAM name to satisfy Masulli and get myself off the hook. Later, Dick Giordano made a mystery out of the thing and that was continued by Sal Gentile and George Wildman. Now that I am through with that other line of work and if (and when) I get back into comics, it'll be under my own name.

Morisi and I continued to correspond off and on for about ten years. The following excerpts are from various letters that pertain (at least indirectly) to Morisi's memories of working for Charlton.

> Pat Masulli was still the editor when Charlton's action-hero line got started. I did my first T-Bolt under Pat and all the rest under Giordano. Both of them left me alone, we'd have phone conversations about the strip, and an occasional meeting, but I was (for the most part) my own boss. Dick

once sent me a $100 Charlton check at Christmas time to say "thank you." He must have done some tall talking with the Charlton brass to make them part with that loot.

Yep, you're right. The Charlton years (1965-67) were good ones. We all seemed to be putting in some extra effort. Bad printing, color, reproduction, and distribution were against us, but we tried. Dick Giordano liked the T-Bolt strip, but cautioned me not to "write over their heads." I'm glad that at least one twelve year old liked it.

By the late 1970s Charlton was reprinting a lot of Morisi's work of a decade earlier. I was seeing much of it for the first time, particularly the western stories. Unlike most collectors, I've never been bothered much by reprints. In particular, I had enjoyed the Masked Raider, Kid Montana, and "Man Called Loco" stories. It was only natural that I should ask Morisi about them.

All I remember about The Masked Raider jobs I did, is that they were rushed. With the exception of 4 or 5 jobs, it was always rush, rush, rush. I was able to get some quality in a few of those jobs only if I had an extra day off from work, or was on vacation. The same applied to Billy the Kid, Lash LaRue, Gunmaster, The Man Called Loco, and of course, T-Bolt, Kid Montana, and Vengeance Squad. I did the best I could with the time I had—without ever trying to fake or bluff my way through a script—on purpose. T-Bolt, in fact, was a losing proposition (money wise) but it was something I felt I had to do. I could have made faster bucks doing other strips but I couldn't resist the challenge.

A random clutch of PAM Charlton covers: **Johnny Dynamite** #11, Aug. 1955, **Masked Raider** #21, Dec. 1959; **Kid Montana** #44, Jan. 1964; **Vengeance Squad** #3, Nov. 1975. All images © Charlton Comics Group

"The Man Called Loco" strip never got off the ground. Denny O'Neil wrote the first few stories and made Loco a serious character. Joe Gill took over and wrote Loco like Kid Montana and The Masked Raider, sort of simple and to the point. No morality speeches, just an easy story. I was stuck in the middle and really couldn't nail down a set character for Loco.

I kind of miss the old grind. There's still a few things I wanted to try—some different directions I wanted to explore—but without the confidence of the "right" editor it can't be done. Charlton always left me alone. "Do it your way, Pete" was the standard phrase from Pat Masulli, Dick Giordano, Sal Gentile, and George Wildman. "Add panels, drop panels, change the story, rewrite the endings—we trust you." Quite a compliment, and a situation I never took advantage of by hacking out a job. My "rush" jobs were due to deadlines, not intent.

By this time I had become friends with artist Pat Boyette, and we visited from time to time by phone. During one of our chats he mentioned that Charlton never intended to make money from publishing comic books. All Charlton wanted to do was keep the presses running during slack periods. I passed that thought along to Morisi for the sake of discussion. It seems his opinion was a little different:

I can't agree that "Charlton Comics were never intended to make money." Dick Giordano once told me: "Don't kid yourself, Pete. Every piece of art that Charlton buys makes money, sooner or later, somewhere along the line. That artwork pays for itself . . . over and over again."

And on that note, this article must come to a close. I've exhausted the allotted amount of space. Fear not, however, as I will pick up next issue right where I've left off. . . .

© 2004 Ron Frantz

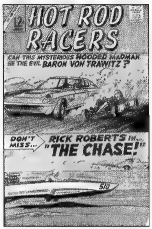
*[**Ed. note:** After Ron delivered his column and as this issue was in final production, we sadly learned of the passing of Pete Morisi on October 12, 2003. Both Ron and I were looking forward to Pete's reaction to seeing again his long-ago words to a dedicated Morisi fan, but sadly, this is now not to be. Look for more extensive coverage of the life and work of PAM in the very next **Charlton Spotlight**.]*

Jack Keller Flags Home

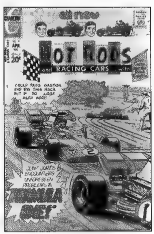
THE COMICS WORLD lost a gaint when veteran Charlton and Marvel artist-writer Jack Keller died on January 2, 2003, in Reading, PA, after a short illness. He was 80.

Jack Keller was born in Reading on June 16, 1922, and lived there most of his life. Entirely self-taught as an artist, Keller had a career that spanned thirty-two years. His first professional work appeared in 1941 when he wrote, penciled, lettered, and inked comic book story "The Whistler" and sent it to Dell Comics, which published it in its *War Stories* #5. Through that decade Keller penciled and inked for Quality Comics, Lev Gleason, Fawcett, and other publishers, also doing backgrounds for Lou Fine on Will Eisner's *The Spirit*. In 1950 he began drawing for Timely (later Marvel) on western, horror, and crime features, and from 1951 on did his best-known Marvel work on *Kid Colt, Outlaw*, an association that would last until 1967.

Keller was an intense car buff, a passion that spilled over into his comic art. He broadened his horizons and his accounts when he signed with Charlton in 1955 and then-assistant editor Dick Giordano put Keller to work on features for *Hot Rods and Racing Cars*. After the "Atlas implosion" of 1957 (when except for *Kid Colt* his Marvel work dried up) Keller's relationship with Charlton grew stronger. He was a prolific artist in several genres, producing scores of western, war, and weird stories for *Billy the Kid*, *Cheyenne Kid*, *Sheriff of Tombstone*, various war and *Fightin'* books, and the ghost titles that started in the late 1960s. But it was his domination of the race-car titles that gave Keller his ultimate reknown at Charlton. His output of these features grew as Charlton expanded in the genre, and when Giordano assumed executive-editor reins in 1966, Keller was given near-total control of the hot rod line. Always seeking a new challenge, he created continuing characters for his stories, famously Scot Jackson, Clint Curtis, and Rick Roberts. "The books exploded into four bi-monthly publications," said Jack in a July 2002 letter to me. "I gave them a wide variety of stories covering all types of motor events."



Hot Rod Racers #12, Jan. 1967 © Charlton Comics Group.



Hot Rods and Racing Cars #119, Apr. 1973 © Charlton Comics Group.

WOW! A TOYOTA 2000 GT. WHAT A SET OF WHEELS! MAN, WHO'S IT BELONG TO, ARNIE?
NONE OTHER THAN YOURS TRULY... OWON, HOP IN AND I'LL GIVE YA A RIDE, FRED!
U.S. MAIL
WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY: JACK KELLER
LETTERED BY: RICK KELLER
D143

Splash panel to "Joy Ride," from an unidentified 1971 issue of **Hot Rods and Racing Cars** From the original art Art © 2004 Estate of Jack Keller; *HR&RC* © Charlton Comics Group.

Keller's work appeared alongside Charlton mainstays Tony Tallarico, the Charles Nicholas/Vince Alascia team, and Dick Giordano. "I illustrated Joe Gill's hot rod and racing car stories for the first few years," said Jack. "I enjoyed doing them. Good writer. Sorry, I never met the gentleman. However, I was a real hot rod and racing buff and felt that my writing could reach some different situations. Never had a lesson in writing or attended art school. But I had lots of desire and imagination. I loved to draw and had to do it my way. I loved illustrating 'Kid Colt, Outlaw' for Stan Lee. But doing the whole package for Charlton I enjoyed most."

Often Keller produced

IN MEMORIAM

GRASS GREEN

RICHARD "GRASS" GREEN, popular writer-artist who was widely published in fanzines and underground comix, died August 5, 2002. He was 63.

Green, who was given his colorful nickname by the late Ronn Foss, was the first prominent African American active in comics fandom of the 1960s. His first published work was a cover, in collaboration with boyhood friend Foss, for *Alter Ego* #4 (1962). He had a facility for humorous comics parodies in the Kurtzman vein, such as "Da Frantic Four" and "Speed Marvel," but proved to be equally adept at straight-ahead superhero action. His best-known character was Xal-Kor the Human Cat, which topped readers polls in numerous issues of the fanzine *Star-Studded Comics*, beginning in 1964. Xal-Kor returned several times in various publishing formats, most recently in May 2002 in a graphic novella from TwoMorrows Publishing. He was planning a new series of Xal-Kor adventures when his life was cut short.

Grass Green sketched this color design-marker illustration on a mid-1980s letter to Steve Fiorilla. Courtesy of Steve. Art © 2004 Estate of Richard Green.

In the 1960s, Green was considered one of the top fan artists, and his work appeared in the top fanzines. In addition to the aforementioned *Alter Ego* and *Star-Studded Comics*, he drew for *Fantasy Illustrated*, *Rocket's Blast–Comicollector*, *Super-Hero*, *Komix Illustrated*, *Masquerader*, *The Buyer's Guide for Comic Fandom*, and many others. His work was characterized by rollicking action, ebullient humor and an infectious freewheeling quality that was highly appealing.

The artist's only breakthrough into mainstream professional comics was for Charlton Comics, beginning with the appearance of his cocreation (with Roy Thomas) of the Shape in *Charlton Premiere* #1 (1967). Green drew several more humorous strips for Charlton, mostly in *Go-Go*, around the same time. He broke into the underground comix market in the early 1970s, and produced titles for Eros Comics in the ensuing years.

Grass Green was also a musician who had appeared on Ted Mack's *Amateur Hour* in his youth, and continued to entertain in clubs in the South Bend, Indiana, area where he made his home. He is survived by his wife Janice Green.

As the end drew near, Grass suddenly asked me (in an e-mail) if I would like to continue the adventures of Xal-Kor, the Human Cat, when and if he was no longer able. Of course I agreed, because I wanted Grass to know that his great cat saga would continue . . . but it was with sadness because it brought with it Grass's tacit acknowledgment that his time was short. The arrangements were made, and I am now the proprietor of the rights to Xal-Kor and company . . . but at present, I don't have the heart to make concrete plans for

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. . . JACK KELLER, cont'd

entire books, in later years turning the lettering over to his teenaged son Rick. "I wrote the hot rod and racing stories, illustrated them, and even supplied coloring notes pertaining to the correct colors for international racing cars (i.e. Formula One)," Jack wrote. "For some time Charlton coloring was very poor. Light colors in the foreground, dark colors in the background. A complete reversal of the norm. It was awful. The dark background blotted out the lightly inked work. Foreground Ferraris were pink, not red. Very disturbing. Finally they went back to conventional coloring."

With 1967 and the end of his long run on Marvel's *Kid Colt*, Keller would work exclusively for Charlton. "I seldom visited the Charlton office in Derby and always mailed in my completed work," Jack said. "My favorite editor was Dick Giordano. He met me several times in N.Y.C. Also entertained me at his home in Derby. He was a friend. Though I worked for Sal Gentile several years, we never met. He seemed to be a good guy, gave me lots of war stories to illustrate." To its granddaddy title *Hot Rods and Racing Cars* Charlton added a slough of new entries in the 1960s hot rod lineup: *Teenage Hotrodders*, *Dragstrip Hotrodders*, *Hot Rod Racers*, *Top Eliminator*, *Grand Prix*, *World of Wheels*, *Drag 'n' Wheels*, and the hybrid cycle/car book *Surf 'n' Wheels*. Eventually all but two, venerable *Hot Rods and Racing Cars* and *Drag 'n' Wheels*, fell by the wayside. "I don't know whether it was under [Gentile's] direction or Charlton policy, [but] racing mags were reduced to two. Then none, as most of the publications were changed to animation, and handled in Mexico."

Charlton permanently suspended its last racing car books in 1973 and Jack laid down his pencils and brushes to return to his love of cars—collecting models for fun and selling real ones for a living. He would draw a handful of hot rod stories for DC's short-lived *Hot Wheels* before retiring from comics for good in 1973, but with Keller's last chronicles of Scot Jackson, Rick Roberts, and their gang, an entire modern comic book genre effectively vanished.

Toward the end of his life, Jack Keller was rediscovered by comics fandom. He regularly appeared at Reading-area comics cons, autographing books and selling original art. Jack was interviewed for *Comic Book Artist* #12, March 2001, as part of its thorough Charlton Comics coverage; *Alter Ego* #23, April 2003, carried an informative account of Jack and his career. For a fun and loving tribute to Jack Keller and the action-filled world of race car comics and real-life drag racing, see the memoir "Summer, Race Cars & Comic Books," by Doc Lehman, on the *Dirt America* racing site, *www.DirtAmericaOnline.com*, in the archives section.

By all accounts Jack Keller was a kind and gentle man, amused and surprised by the attention his long comics career ultimately brought him. He leaves behind a loving family of children and grandchildren and many fans, but also a kind of comics entertainment the likes of which we'll probably never see again.

—Michael Ambrose

more adventures. Grass and I became very close in the last several years, and I miss him terribly. As I told his wife Janice, Grass brought joy to a lot of people through his comics—and there'll never be another like him.

—Bill Schelly

[***Ed. Note:*** *Grass Green's epic graphic novella* Xal-Kor, the Human Cat *is still available from Bill Schelly's Hamster Press. See ordering information for it and other fine Hamster Press publications at* www.billschelly.com *or write to P.O. Box 27471, Seattle, WA 98165.*]

Grass Green at Charlton

AS THE HISTORY of Charlton Comics goes, Grass Green was among the minor players, producing fewer than twenty stories for the whole of his brief career there. But he surely played a part in the "Giordano Revolution" that briefly flowered with memorable action-heroes, colorful new titles, and a renewed sense of excitement about Charlton comics.

All of Grass's stories were humor strips, including the action-hero tryout story "The Shape" in *Charlton Premiere* #1. His entree to Charlton came via Roy Thomas, who recommended him to editor Dick Giordano (Thomas "told DG I was fast," Grass said in a November 2000 letter to me). As Giordano wrote in his editorial for *Premiere* #1, "The Shape cleanly illustrates the reason for CHARLTON PREMIERE. . . . Grass Green started working for us as a result of this job. We were so impressed with it that we've been using Grass' art ever since." Sadly, the Shape failed to catch readers' fancies (along with the Tyro Team and the Spookman, tryouts also appearing in that issue) and never appeared anywhere else again, though Grass went on to illustrate scripts by Steve Skeates, Denny O'Neil (writing as "Sergius O'Shaugnessy"), and Gary Friedrich in *Abbott and Costello* and *Go-Go*. Most memorable to comics fans are probably the linked stories "Bestest League of America" and "The BLA vs. the Marvelous Superheroes" in *Go-Go* #'s 5 and 6, but Grass's series of "Far-Out Fairy Tales," such as "Beauty and the Blah," "Little Orphan Riding Hood," "Hansel and Gesundheit," "Snow What," etc., are also delightful reads to this day. Grass penciled, inked, and lettered his own work for the most part but occasionally was finished by Anthony Ferme, Frank McLaughlin, or Ernie Bache.

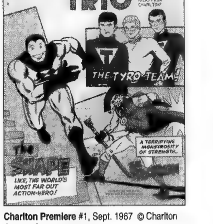
"When DG went to DC," Grass further stated in his letter, "I'd hoped he'd send a few morsels my way, but he'd only used me for humorous stuff, which he had NO need for at DC. 'Bout the best thing re: me working for Charlton was meeting and becoming friends with Rocke Mastroserio, who was a source of constant encouragement. I was only over to Derby a coupla times; Rocke and I mostly wrote each other. He thought that with more work, I'd get better, and encouraged me to keep drawing and submitting stuff."

In a later letter, Grass recounted that he "did the logo for *Charlton Premiere*. As I remember it, Dick Giordano told me he wanted to do a book to intro new characters and I came up with *CP*, name and all. Was kinda disappointed that (to my knowledge) DG never gave me credit of any kind. I never made a big deal about the non-mention, but it did *hurt* a little; I, even now, still consider it one of the best illos I've ever done. Ah, well—that was 33 years ago. Been hurt 'way worse than that across the years and am still goin'."

After Giordano's departure from Charlton at the end of 1967 for the greener pastures of DC Comics, the last of Grass's Charlton work appeared in *Abbott and Costello*. "Sal Gentile gently rejected my efforts, i.e., queries re: doing more work for Charlton. George Wildman didn't give me any work for any of the Charlton books, but DID have me do a couple ditties for *Etc*/*witzend*. About the Shape—I tried to get him 'revived' at Charlton, but—I think it was Pat Masulli that nixed the idea. Might've been Wildman—I can't remember. . . . I think my big 'problem' was that I was 'big' in Early Comics Fandom as a 'fan artist' believing all the compliments and urgings that I was pro material, only to find that pro editors did not agree! If not for Roy Thomas, I'd probably never even have gotten work at Charlton!"

In the last months of his life, Grass and I began working on a comprehensive by-mail interview to cover his whole comics career, with a Charlton focus. However, we had not gotten very far before he became too ill to continue, so I'm afraid that final interview will remain unfinished. I'm glad I got to know Grass just a little, before he left us, and am grateful for his generous and lighthearted nature. His enthusiasm for and love of comics never waned.

—Michael Ambrose



Charlton Premiere #1, Sept. 1967 © Charlton Comics Group.

The Grass Green Charlton Checklist

Compiled by Michael Ambrose; some data supplied by Gary Usher & Steve Skeates. Additions & corrections welcome.

Abbott and Costello	1	Feb 68	Beauty and the Blah [Pt 1]	4	scr-O'Neil
Abbott and Costello	2	May 68	Beauty and the Blah [Pt II]	4	scr-O'Neil
Abbott and Costello	4	Sep 68	Hey Gang, Let's Play College!!	2	scr-Skeates [puzzle]
Abbott and Costello	5	Nov 68	Little Orphan Riding Hood [Pt I]	4	scr-Skeates; inks-Bache
Abbott and Costello	6	Jan 69	Little Orphan Riding Hood [Pt II]	4	scr-Skeates
Abbott and Costello	7	Mar 69	Hansel and Gesundheit [Pt 1]	4	scr-Skeates; inks-Ferme
Abbott and Costello	8	Apr 69	Hansel and Gesundheit [Pt II]	4	scr-Skeates; inks-Ferme
Charlton Premiere	1	Sep 67	It's the Shape!	7	cocreated w/ Roy Thomas; inks-McLaughlin
Go-Go	5	Feb 67	The Bestest League of America!!!	4	scr-Friedrich
Go-Go	6	Apr 67	The Swingin' Saga of Superella [Pt 1]	4	scr-Friedrich
Go-Go	6	Apr 67	The BLA vs The Marvelous Super-Heroes	4	scr-Friedrich; inks-McLaughlin
Go-Go	7	Jun 67	Snow What [Pt 1]	4	scr-Skeates
Go-Go	7	Jun 67	The Swingin' Saga of Superella [Pt II]	4	scr-O'Neil
Go-Go	8	Aug 67	Snow What [Pt II]	4	scr-Skeates
Go-Go	8	Aug 67	Rapunzelstilskin [Pt I]	4	scr-Skeates; inks-McLaughlin
Go-Go	9	Oct 67	Rapunzelstilskin [Pt II]	4	scr-Skeates

The Division Street Ramble

Editorial Musings, Charlton News & Reviews . . . *this page*

We Get Letters! . . . *66*

CHS's *Heroes, Heartthrobs & Horrors* . . . *69*

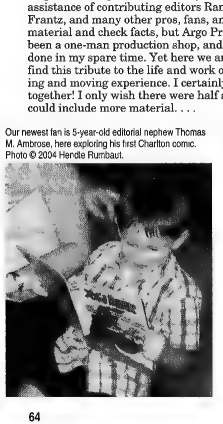
Michael Ambrose, *Editor*

Charlton Spotlight (formerly *Fightin' K.P.*) Vol. 1, No. 3 • Winter / Spring 2004 • "All the Charlton news that prints in fits"

WELCOME ABOARD the Division Street Rambler, Car No. 3. The conductor will be by shortly to take your tickets. Next stop—*adventure!*

If this is your first issue of *Charlton Spotlight,* and you're wondering what you've gotten yourself into, our focus is simply stated: We're here to explore the history of the Charlton Comics Group, late of Derby, Connecticut. We mean to examine the whole rainbow range of Charlton's comics line, from **Abbott & Costello** to **Zoo Funnies** and everything in between. The issue you hold in your hands is a fair example of where we've been so far and where we're bound.

Irregular schedules and less-than-timely frequency are all part of the process when you publish a small press magazine like *Charlton Spotlight.* So are apologies for being late. I'd hoped to have this issue in print much earlier than the start of 2004—ideally, close to the anniversary of Tom's passing on May 1. However, since I announced in #2 that we would devote #3 to a special **Tom Sutton** tribute, I received so much from so many generous individuals who knew and worked with Tom that the deadline kept receding. I was still tracking down TFS artwork, memoirs, commentary, and sundry details all the way through the summer and into the fall of 2003. Too, producing what amounts to a double-size issue has taken far longer than I'd planned for. I rely heavily on the invaluable assistance of contributing editors Ramon Schenk and Ron Frantz, and many other pros, fans, and friends, to help gather material and check facts, but Argo Press is and always has been a one-man production shop, and everything I publish is done in my spare time. Yet here we are at last, and I hope you find this tribute to the life and work of Tom Sutton a rewarding and moving experience. I certainly have had fun putting it together! I only wish there were half again as many pages so I could include more material. . . .



Our newest fan is 5-year-old editorial nephew Thomas M. Ambrose, here exploring his first Charlton comic. Photo © 2004 Hendle Rumbaut.

I also can't refrain from pointing out that despite this issue's carrying a cover price a third again higher than that for a "normal" issue, those lucky devils who subscribed at the regular price are getting this "Charlton Spotlight Big Book" at no extra charge. . . . But this oversized issue is an anomaly. Though I will publish larger issues as the contents warrant, for the future the magazine will stabilize at 48–52 pages.

Lastly, since our primary mission here is to remedy the lack of Charlton Comics history—the comics, their creators, and the context in which they worked—we have an ongoing need of *your* help with Charlton artwork, interviews, checklists, memoirs, analytical articles, reviews, and more. If you have original or unpublished art, obscure or old fanzine articles, interviews with Charlton creators, or a unique tale to tell about your own Charlton experience, we'd appreciate hearing from you. Contributors are paid in copies and glory!

IN MEMORIAM

I sometimes get the feeling that each new issue of *Spotlight* eerily resembles an obituary column. I don't mean for the magazine to become an ongoing series of memorial tributes. But the sad fact is that far too many of our original creators are leaving us far too soon. If we are to properly celebrate and learn more about the work of our favorite Charlton creators, we must acknowledge their passing in these pages.

I had been in the preliminary stages of an e-mail interview with **Pete Morisi** for close to a year when the exchange came to an abrupt halt in late April 2003. Pete had mentioned that neither he nor his wife were in the best of health lately, so I decided to let him be for a while and not push the back-and-forth. I wrote him again in September, with no response. Then came the news of Pete's death on Oct. 12, 2003. Pete's wife Louise had died in May, then Pete himself suffered grave injuries in a serious traffic accident shortly thereafter and never returned home from the hospital. We offer our deepest condolences to Pete's family for their tragic losses.

An exceptional two-part interview with Pete by Glen Johnson ran in **Comic Book Artist #s** 9 and 12, and Pete said early on in our exchange that he doubted whether anybody would care to hear anymore from him about his comics career. But I figure there's always more to learn if you ask the right questions, and Pete was game for an informal Q&A. Along the way we shared similar interests in music and film besides discussing his earlies comics work, his tenure on the **Johnny Dynamite** stories for Comic Media, and his jobs and production routines at Charlton. In the end there wasn't really enough solid talk to make up an interview, but rest assured we'll offer some of Pete's comments and quotes along with more extensive memoirs and tributes to P.A.M. next issue. Consider this a call for contributions. . . .

Pete Millar singlehandedly kept alive the genre of drag-racing cartoons with his long-running **DRAGcartoons**

Back issues of Charlton Spotlight are available! #1 is out of print in its original edition, but I offer a looseleaf print-out set (or a PDF file on CD-ROM) for $5.95 postpaid. Regular printed edition of #2 is still available at $5.95. #3 (the one you're currently reading) is $7.95. Add $4.00 per copy for shipment to Canada; double the cover price for airmail shipment elsewhere. (Sorry, but U.S. airmail rates are murder!) Two-issue subscriptions are $11/$12/$24. All payments in U.S. funds, check/MO payable to **Argo Press** or credit card via PayPal to mikeargo@flash.net. Argo Press, P.O. Box 4201, Austin, TX 78765.

magazine and other projects. In spring 2002 Pete completed his mammoth magnum opus **History of Hotrod Comic Books** on CD-ROM. Pete rounded that last track into the sunset on Feb. 28, 2003. He was 73. Although **DRAG-cartoons** will appear no more, the Millar family will keep Pete's operation going, offering magazines, CDs, limited-edition covers, and T-shirts, and plans to update Pete's site with new artwork. Look for these at **www.LAFFyerASPHALT.com**.

We're also deeply saddened to report the passing of legendary comics artist, writer, editor, and Atomic Mouse creator **Vince Fago**. Born November 28, 1914, Vince got early work in animation from 1933 on, including a stint at Fleischer Studios from 1938 to 1942, where he assisted on **Superman** cartoons, among other features. Vince replaced **Stan Lee** as Timely's editor-in-chief while Lee was in the army 1943–45. Vince created and drew **Atomic Mouse** for older brother **Al Fago** when the latter was Charlton Comics' editor from the late 1940s to the mid-50s. The brothers teamed up to create Fago Magazines, which issued a dozen comics in 1958–59 before folding. Vince had a long run on the syndicated **Peter Rabbit** strip and for the last decade of his life self-published a line of **Rabbit-Man Music** books and educational materials. Vince passed away June 13, 2002, active to the end. Jim Amash conducted an in-depth interview with Vince in **Alter Ego** #11, Nov. 2001, and an additional interview and a new Vince Atomic Mouse illo appeared in **SFA Spotlight** #11, May 2001 (Shanda Fantasy Arts).

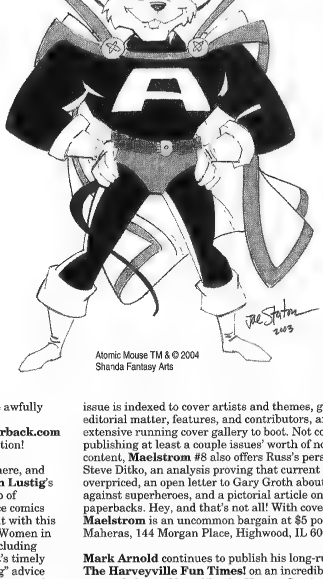
NEWS & REVIEWS

Shanda Fantasy Arts' **Mike Curtis** sends this exciting dispatch: "In **Atomic Mouse** #3, upcoming, we've got something special. Libby Singleton has written an *AM* story and the artist we have to draw it is **JOE STATON.** Joe never did the Mouse while he was at Charlton, so we have a Charlton character and a Charlton artist meeting for the first time. Here's a sketch of AM by Joe, to show how it will look." What can we say, Mike, but that we know Vince would be awfully proud. Write to **shandafa@cyberback.com** for more information!

Last Kiss
4
16.99
BUT, WARDEN, YOU CAN'T LET HER DO NOW! SHE'S 57— BUT SHE'S ONLY 35 YEARS TO GO ON HER SENTENCE!
I'M GETTING TIRED OF YOU BAD MOUTHING!
WILD & WICKED "WOMEN IN PRISON" ISSUE!

Last Kiss #4 is here, and it's a doozy! **John Lustig**'s hilarious send-up of Charlton romance comics scores another hit with this "Wild & Wicked Women in Prison Issue," including Martha Stewtart's timely "Big HouseLiving" advice column, an interview with a comics shop owner who moonlights as a parole officer, contests, pinups, letters, and more. **LK**'s 48 pages are a bargain at $4.99. Get more details at **www.LastKissComics.com**.

Vanguard Publishing has reissued an improved, revised, and greatly expanded trade paperback edition of **Pat Boyette**'s landmark **The Nightstand Chillers**, which originally appeared as a 1998 **Tales from the Edge** special. Five stories have been added as well as a 9-page portfolio, with an introduction by Alex Toth, a Boyette interview, tributes by Archie Goodwin, Jim Steranko, Gray Morrow, Tom Sutton, Rich Corben, and others, and a Boyette checklist/index. B&W, 112 pp., $16.95. I know I'll be picking this one up!



Atomic Mouse TM & © 2004 Shanda Fantasy Arts

The 900-pound gorilla of **Russ Maheras**'s new issue #8 of his long-running zine **Maelstrom** is a mammoth three-part index to the first 400 issues of **The Buyer's Guide for Comic Fandom** (which we know today as **The Comics Buyer's Guide**). For sheer weight of scholarship, the index can't be beat and will probably never be equaled. Every **TBG** issue is indexed to cover artists and themes, general content, editorial matter, features, and contributors, and there's an extensive running cover gallery to boot. Not content with publishing at least a couple issues' worth of normal fanzine content, **Maelstrom** #8 also offers Russ's personal tribute to Steve Ditko, an analysis proving that current comic books are overpriced, an open letter to Gary Groth about *TCJ*'s bias against superheroes, and a pictorial article on collecting paperbacks. Hey, and that's not all! With covers by Russ, **Maelstrom** is an uncommon bargain at $5 postpaid to Russ Maheras, 144 Morgan Place, Highwood, IL 60040.

Mark Arnold continues to publish his long-running fanzine **The Harveyville Fun Times!** on an incredibly regular quarterly basis. If you like the Harvey Comics legacy, Archie, or any kind of humor comic, this magazine is the place to be. Mark will have an in-depth survey of Charlton's **Sick** magazine for us in a future *Spotlight*. Order a sample **THFT!** for $6, 4-issue sub $16, from Mark Arnold, PO Box 2616, Saratoga, CA 95070, e-mail **thft@att.net**, web **http://thft.homeatt.net**.

Mad Scientist #7, Spring 2003, is a delightful romp into film and comics, with in-depth, illustrated reviews of monster movies *The Lost World* and *The Mole People*. There's also a

detailed survey of Charlton's **Doomsday+1** series, including covers, repros from original art, and new commentary by **John Byrne**. Send $3 to Martin Arlt, 3291 Turnberry Ln., Ann Arbor, MI 48108.

SPOTLIGHT MAILBAG

We received a ton of feedback to *Spotlight* #2, real and virtual. We begin on a sad note with responses from the late P.A.M. and Pete Millar. . . .

Pete Morisi
Staten Island, NY

I got the *Spotlight* #2 you sent me, & enjoyed every bit of it. I never met him, but Pat Boyette first called me, many years ago, when he was visiting at the Charlton building in Derby, Connecticut. He had seen some of my work there & was impressed by it. So much so, that he called to compliment me. That was a nice thing to do, & shows you the kind of guy he was. Naturally, we were "telephone friends" from that point on. We talked about everything, anything, & nothing, while developing a healthy respect for each other.

His work, of course, speaks for itself . . . clean, crisp, & stylish. Pat could (& did) do it all, & did it all very well. He could create, write, pencil, ink, letter, paint, direct, act, produce films, & was a newscaster, who also hosted a radio talk show . . . among other things. I could go on & on, but most of your interviews in issues #1 & 2 of *Charlton Spotlight* cover the quality & quantity of his work. To say that he was a "good guy" doesn't say enough about him, but that's exactly what he was . . a decent human being. I'll miss the guy.

Tom Sutton is another great loss. I never met the man, but admired his talent.

That "Joe Shuster" story you printed . . . isn't. That *may* be Bill Molno art, but not Joe Shuster.

The prevailing opinion (at the moment) is that it's Shuster breakdowns with Ray Osrin finishes. Maybe a Molno ink assist?

Pete Millar
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA

I CERTAINLY appreciate the review of the "HISTORY CD" and the plug for DRAGcartoons #51 . . . I need all the help I can get . and YOU, among others have been most kind in that regards.

Your publication lives up to its reputation . . and is MOST informative and extremely well "put together" . . . you've learned from the best of them . . and I also thank you for the copy of "the COSMIC BOOK" . . . with the TOP artists in the industry.

Thanks 'gain,
Pete

Bill Pearson
Mayer, AZ

Got the magazine yesterday and have just finished reading it through to the end. Nice job! Here's my take on it:

Too bad you didn't have a nice illustration for the cover . . . I'm afraid I consider the cover the weakest element of the book, something that might work as part of an ad, but . . . a cover???

I didn't personally learn much new about Bill Black, since I've known him since we were both young fans publishing fanzines, but I'm sure others will enjoy this interview . . . I remember being very pleased with those covers, and happy I could publish *new* ones on some of the titles.

I found the article by Ron Frantz fascinating, particularly since I know many of the people he came across on his trip, and could easily agree with his first impressions of most of them. A very perceptive guy! By the way, when I left Charlton, about 1982, it was already in decline. The old man had died, and he was the "force" of the company. His sons were dolts, and the people in charge were completely devoid of imagination. Ron's article confirms my suspicion that the company just withered away in the years after I left, and I'm glad I got out when I did.

Baumann's article gave me a little more insight into Boyette's life. I only met Boyette once, shared a nice lunch with him in Texas on a drive across the country, and do wish I could have known him better over a long space of time. I did correspond with him and converse on the phone occasionally. A very intelligent, talented man. Baumann's line, "How could such a robust and complete a man be gone," is right on the mark.

The reprint story didn't do much for me . . . I've seen so many of these mundane (sorry!) stories. But I'm sure many of your readers will appreciate it.

Fortier's article was interesting too. It's satisfying to know I helped someone get a career started. It's not important, but although they thought they were dealing with a "company," they were just dealing with me. Nobody else at Charlton, including Wildman, knew or cared who I was rejecting or accepting for the *Bullseye*. I used Wildman's secretary to type my letters, and I remember George wondering what the hell I could be expounding on at such length with those guys! His letters, when he was forced to write one, usually consisted of one or two sentences.

Interesting letters and spot illustrations. Your generous nature is evident by the many plugs you included for other publishers and creators. Altogether (except for the cover) a fine publication. Too bad you can't publish more often, but that's a problem for all of us, isn't it!

Like baking a cake. Cook spends all afternoon at it, and the family scarfs it down in a few minutes. Here you've spent MONTHS at the myriad jobs of getting this to the printer . . . then we read it in a couple of hours and say . . . What's next?

Frank McLaughlin
Stratford, CT

Thanks much for your c'ton s'light. I was very impressed with the professional quality.

Could have used you back at Charlton in the good old days. Brought back some fond memories (and some not so fond). I have always felt that comics were more of a cottage industry than the big corporate affair that it had become. Maybe efforts like yours (and others) will get things back on track if it's not too late.

Batton Lash
San Diego, CA

Apologies for such a tardy message regarding *Charlton Spotlight* #2. It was another great issue—cover to cover, chock filled with interesting, unmined comics history. From the dawn to the twilight of the "little company that could." Fascinating stuff! And once again, the layout and presentation was first rate.

The big shocker was the reprint of the Joe Shuster story. It's hard to believe from that style that this was from the same person who drew those seminal Superman comics. What does look familiar, however, is that he may be the one who worked on "The Spirit" section in 1952—after Eisner but before Wally Wood took over. Anyone else see the similarities? And is it really Joe Shuster or a "ghost" from his shop? Inquiring minds want to know!

Thanks for the kind words regarding *Supernatural Law*. I am looking forward to *Charlton Spotlight* #3!

Brett Warnock
Top Shelf Productions

Thanks so much for sending me the new ish of *Charlton Spotlight*. Holy crap—I LOVE this magazine! The Ron Frantz memoir was fabulous. The Shuster strip sublime; boy his chops sure did grow over the years. I haven't seen much of his post-Golden Age material. And now I'm just dying to track down Mr. Jigsaw!!!

Jerry Edwards
Vancouver, WA

I received *Charlton Spotlight* #1 yesterday and received #2 a couple of weeks ago, so I thought I would provide some feedback.

As a way of clarifying my comments, I've never collected the Charlton comics—but I have bought various issues over the years. I probably only had about 100 or so issues when I sold them (along with most of my 25,000+ collection) in the very early 1980s. Most of my

interest in Charlton has been the Steve Ditko science fiction I was never much of a horror fan of any comics company

But I have always been interested in comics history in general and especially enjoy reading about comics companies that I know very little about.

Charlton Spotlight #1—I remember coming across Pat Boyette's name through the years, so I welcomed your special tribute to him. The wide range of tributes from friends and variety of art was just what I hope for when reading a tribute. My favorites were Pat's daughter Melissa's memories, and the tributes by Steve Skeates and Ron Frantz—Melissa for her personal info, Steve for info on how he felt Pat saved Steve's writing, and Ron for his stories about Pat and Danny Williams and George Bush. I also much appreciated Don Mangus' short list of some of his favorite Pat work, some of which I will search for—such as *Robin Red and the Lutins*.

I always buy comics historical publications at least partly for the art I especially enjoyed Pat's genie illo "Discovery" on page 3, the Spencer Spook on page 11, and the *Creepy* #39 "Death of the Wizard" from page 40.

I discovered I do own some of Pat's work—"Dream World" from *Strange Suspense Stories* v. 1 #2 (1968), "Survivor" from *Epic Illustrated* #19 (1983), his cover and logo from *Revolver* 3 & 5 (1986), "A Prediction" from *Anything Goes* #3 (1987), and his cover from *Classics Illustrated* #7 (1990). I probably have more, but just need to search a bit more. I plan to go back and reread/relook at those comics soon.

Charlton Spotlight #2—I bought this issue first, due to Ron Fortier e-mailing me about the "Jiggy" info. I enjoy the whiter, slicker paper—compared to #1. I most enjoyed the Bill Black interview—especially the 1983 AC Comics rights to the Charlton characters; Ron Frantz' info on visiting Charlton—especially his visit with Steve Ditko; and Ron Fortier's Mr. Jigsaw—especially for his info on "Duel In The Stars" and some new info on the creation of "Jiggy."

Of the art, I especially enjoyed the *Peacemaker* #1 cover by Pat on the inner front page, the Ditko cover to *ACE Comics Presents* #1 on page 7, The Peacemaker/Golden Pharaoh splash page on page 16, and the new Jiggy art on page 26.

The info and art in these two publications have led me to buy a few Charlton comics at my local comics shop and win bids on several of them on eBay. I look forward to hopefully finding more of Pat Boyette's work, as well as enjoying whatever other new art/story appears. Thanks for the pleasure your work has given me.

Contact Ron Frantz at **midguard20@aol.com** *to order copies of* **Robin Red and the Lutins** *and* **ACE Comics Presents.** *Heck, I have a feeling Ron could make you a smokin' deal on a complete set of ACE books! Check 'em out at* **http://members.aol.com/midguard20/Midguardindex.html**.

•

Bill Schelly
Seattle, WA

Hey, thanks for the fantastic second issue of *Charlton Spotlight!* I hope you are getting enough support to keep the issues coming, and maybe even a little faster. There's certainly plenty of material to cover.

I think many people have a soft spot for Charlton because they read them before the age of 9 or 10; in other words, in their "pre-critical" period, when it wasn't the quality of the art or printing that mattered as much as the story, and even a hackneyed story was new to them. That's not to say that there hasn't been a lot of very good material from Charlton over the years, that *would* pass anyone's muster. The talented people who worked for them at one time or another makes up a truly awesome roster.

By the way, thanks also for your review of *Sense of Wonder: A Life in Comic Fandom*. I have been pleasantly surprised by the strong response to the book. It was a lot of fun to write.

Comic Fandom Forever!

•

Gary Kato
Honolulu, HI

Thanks for the copies of *Charlton Spotlight* #2. And thanks, also for the bonus *Cosmic Book*. Both were enjoyed thoroughly.

You might be interested to know that I've finally started work on that Mr. Jigsaw strip for the Internet that Ron Fortier mentions in his letter in your letters section. This one is a brand new story, plus a short recap of previous Mr. Jigsaw stories for new readers. The main story is completely penciled and lettered, and about halfway inked and colored. Not sure when I'll be finished but it's a-coming.

. . . and for more on that subject . . .

Ron Fortier
Airship27@comcast.net

Got my copies of *Charlton Spotlight* #2 last Sat. and am really blown away with the effort you put into these mags. This is yet another solid winner. I was totally unaware of Bill Black's connection with Charlton and thus enjoyed his interview very much. Ron Frantz' memoirs also were fun and nostalgic.

Your layouts and editing of my own article were beautifully done and I really liked how the piece came out. Thanks so much for that. The Mr. Jigsaw checklist was a nice touch but underscored my continual regrets that the final tale Gary drew, "Secret Identity" was never published. I wonder if you might like to have it for *CS* #3? Just a thought

And lastly, on that front, I've included two attachments for your enjoyment. One is a pin-up Gary did way back for *Amazing Heroes*' annual swimsuit issue and is a lot of fun. The second is the black-and-white version of Jiggy's first new adventure in many years, "The Lobster That Ate Portland." It is the story that will be run on the new *www.AdventureStrip.com* that will be arriving later this year. I will keep you posted.

Finally, feel free to print my new e-mail address. I'd love to hear from other Charlton or Jiggy fans out there.

That's it. Thanks again for letting Gary and me be a part of this terrific enterprise.

Thank you for the offer to print the never-published final Jiggy story, Ron. We just ran out of room this time (though we do have a wee bit of space for the swimsuit pinup!)! We'd love to have that story for a future ish, however. (For that matter, when will we see a Collected Mr. Jigsaw?*) Meanwhile, Jiggy appeared on the* AdventureStrips *Web site for several months after Ron wrote the above, a site which thrived for a while but sadly came to an end back in May 2003. But Ron adds more recently:*

Here is the scoop on Mr. Jigsaw: it will be appearing free on Brian Meredith's excellent ***www.ModernPulp.com*** starting November 9 [2003]. Brian will begin the weekly upload by restarting our last adventure "The Icemen Cometh" right from the first page, so new readers will not be left out . . . whereas old AS readers will now see it through to completion. We will also have an archives section which will post the first two stories. And a story Gary and I did nearly ten years ago called "Secret Identity," which never saw the light of day, has been redone by Gary in the web format and will run on the site.

•

John Lustig
Seattle, WA

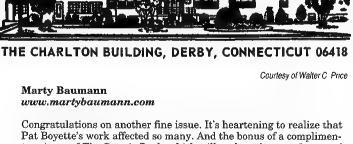
Thanks for the copies of *CS* #2 and *The Cosmic Book*. Once again I

really enjoyed *CS*. Although much info about Charlton has been unearthed in the last couple of years, there's still much to learn and I'm looking forward to future issues. You're doing a great job. I particularly enjoyed reading Ron Frantz's recollections of his Charlton visit.

Thank you as well for the great review of *Last Kiss* #2 & #3. To say that you "can't recommend it highly enough" is strong praise indeed.

By the way, the photograph on the cover shows one of the Charlton delivery trucks. I assume the building in the background is the Charlton building, but it's not clear. Is it?

I'm guessing it's part of the loading dock around in back. Here's a (perhaps idealized) view of the front of the Charlton building as depicted on late-1960s Charlton Press letterhead.



THE CHARLTON BUILDING, DERBY, CONNECTICUT 06418

Courtesy of Walter C. Price

Marty Baumann
www.martybaumann.com

Congratulations on another fine issue. It's heartening to realize that Pat Boyette's work affected so many. And the bonus of a complimentary issue of *The Cosmic Book* (which will replace the very dog-eared copy in my collection) delighted me. I'm likewise obliged to you for mentioning "The Crater Kid" so prominently. Most of all, thanks for a publication that's noteworthy for its absence of rancor. It seems that contemporary discussions of comics—in print journals and online message boards—are often invested with much acrimony and cynicism. So many forgo intelligent exchange in favor of schoolyard name calling. Your magazine offers a celebration, as opposed to a partisan dissection, of the art form. How refreshing.

•

Terry Austin
Woodstock, NY

Thanks for *Charlton Spotlight* #2! Another fine effort that I devoured from cover to cover. Keep 'em coming! Why is it that there are more good magazines being published about comics than good comics?

You asked about an interview concerning Charlton, but my involvement with them was nonexistent, I'm afraid. I think the only thing I did for them was in the *6-Mill. Man* & *Emergency* magazines and I was working at/for Continuity Associates at the time. Regretfully, I never spoke to anyone at Charlton or set foot in the place . . . wish I'd had a chance to experience that unique environment!

•

Tom Christopher
Vashon, WA

What a nice job you're doing on *Charlton Spotlight*. It was nice to see the Bill Black interview, he's someone I never met but I remember his publications from the fanzine days and his Charlton covers may have inspired me to call George Wildman myself.

The Ron Frantz article was interesting. It was nice to see the various creators humanized. What got my interest though was the photos of the Charlton building itself. Thank you Robin Snyder for preserving that brochure.

Interesting as it was to see the "organized crime" rumors about Charlton, it would be equally interesting to see some of the Charlton history alluded to in the first two issues collected in an article that discussed Mr. Santangelo's immigration, the fact that he built Charlton/Capital from one magazine during the depression, the fact that he actually built the Charlton building himself, with the help of his office staff, etc. Simply implying that he had organized crime connections doesn't seem to do the man justice (and unless you've lived in an East Coast city one doesn't understand how commonplace organized crime actually is). Robin Snyder has published some of this in his excellent *History of the Comics* series, but again, it would be

. . . to page 70

About our contributors . . .

Jim Amash is associate editor of *Alter Ego* and a champion interviewer of Golden Age comic book artists. Not only that, but Jim is a working artist himself, having put in time at all the majors including current inking account Archie Comics. Jim wrote a fine appreciation of Pat Boyette for our first issue.

Delbarton, West Virginia, native **Michael Browning** is the managing editor of *The Logan Banner*, a daily newspaper in southern WV. He's collected comics for 26 years and is an advisor for the Overstreet *Comic Book Price Guide*. He is a comic historian who writes for several magazines and is an award-winning photographer

Mark Burbey has written comics for Dark Horse, Fantagraphics, Caliber, and Comico, and he's written about comics for *Comic Art*, *The Warren Companion*, *Comic Book Marketplace*, *The Comics Journal*, *The Comics Buyer's Guide*, *Comics Interview*, *Amazing Heroes*, *Rocket's Blast-Comicollector*, and *Reflex* magazine. He has also written about music and film for *Filmfax*, *Alternative Press*, *Jazziz*, and *Magnet*, and collectibles for *Baby Boomer Collectibles* and *Toy Trader*. You may contact him at *markburbey@earthlink.net*.

Nicola Cuti was assistant editor of the Charlton Comics line under George Wildman through the mid-1970s, cocreated E-Man with Joe Staton, and wrote many of the classic stories that Tom Sutton drew for Charlton's various fantasy titles. Nick has continued to collaborate with Staton on new E-Man stories both in print and on the Web, has worked in film animation in Hollywood, and is an independent filmmaker and producer. See Nick's *Captain Cosmos* short at *www.iflim.com*.

Share **Steve Fiorilla's** views of popular culture at *www.flickhead.com*. Check out his illustration work at *www.jimmedermott.com*. For information on "Fiorilla's Working Class Heroes" T-shirts, drop by at *www.wizzardscastle.com*—where lowbrow art is priced to please

Ron Frantz' Charlton memories appear here regularly. Ron is the author of *Fandom: Confidential*, a critically acclaimed historical documentary of fandom (details at *http://members.aol.com/midguard20/Midguardindex.html*). Currently he is putting the finishing touches to a forthcoming pulp history book. Contact Ron at *midguard20@aol.com*.

Batton Lash is the highly acclaimed ceator of the comic strip and book series *Supernatural Law*. Check this: *www.ExhibitAPress.com*.

Bill Pearson succeeded Nick Cuti as Charlton Comics' assistant editor and stayed there for seven years. Along the way he introduced new creators to print via the innovative *Charlton Bullseye* series, among other accomplishments. Bill is the editor & publisher of the classic *witzend* and keeps promising a new issue any day now . . . but most recently has collaborated with **Bhob Stewart** on the definitive biographical survey *Against the Grain: Mad Artist Wallace Wood* now available from TwoMorrows Publishing.

Stefan Petrucha is perhaps best known for writing *X-Files* for Topps. He currently writes Dark Fantasy novels for White Wolf and comics for Moonstone. Upcoming projects include *Kolchak: The Devil in the Details*, a TPB collection of *Lance Barnes: Post Nuke Dick*, and a revival of his paranormal series *Meta-4*. Publishers interested in *Squalor* can get in touch via *presspet@petrucha.com*.

Ramon Schenk, a Dutch collector whose parents regret the fact that they taught him to read at such an early age, has made it his mission in life to acquire every Charlton comic in existence. That, and about two dozen other life goals that are less realistic, make him a very busy man. Fortunately Ramon finds solace in his career as a teacher in an institution for the criminally insane and his various jobs as a freelance writer and part-time vintage paperback dealer. Ramon lives with Astrid, Max the cat, and way too many stacks of paper. He is also a contributing editor to *Charlton Spotlight* and Webmeister for its Internet presence (*www.charltonspotlight.com*).

Michael Seher (aka *squeek-2* on eBay) is a freelance writer and comics collector-aficionado-historian who lives with his family in New England and is curiously drawn to comics with double covers, and also to the science inherent to Silver Age *Metamorpho*, *Metal Men* and *Flash* stories.

Steve Skeates broke into comics at Marvel, Charlton, and DC in the mid-1960s and wrote a slough of tales for Warren in the 1970s. At Charlton he scripted *Abbott & Costello* and Steve Ditko's Question stories.

Bhob Stewart currently offers classic newspaper comic strip images and commentary at *http://forums.delphiforums.com/bhob2* where he reflects on fame, obscurity and forgotten talents such as the great George Lichty (*Grin and Bear It*). See **Bill Pearson's** entry above to find out what else he's been up to lately.

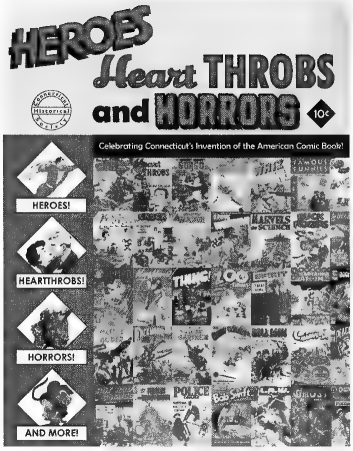
Heroes, Heartthrobs and Horrors

Exhibit opens at Connecticut Historical Society Museum in Hartford, CT

YOU MIGHT be aware that Connecticut business people have introduced generations of Americans to Erector sets, Pez dispensers, Frisbees, and Wiffle balls. But are you aware that the comic book, that indispensable feature of 20th century American popular culture, was invented in Connecticut? The exhibition "Heroes, Heartthrobs and Horrors" will explore Connecticut's pivotal but little known role in the creation and evolution of the American comic book.

Celebrating the 70th anniversary of Waterbury's Eastern Color Printing's invention of the first modern format comic book in 1933, the Connecticut Historical Society's traveling exhibition, "Heroes, Heartthrobs and Horrors," will introduce the public to this fascinating yet overlooked aspect of Connecticut's history. In a visually stimulating environment, rich in hands-on activities complimented by several video presentations, visitors will discover how comic books are made, be introduced to some of the people who made them, learn about how comic books can provide surprising insights into American society and culture, and see how Connecticut-based printers, publishers, artists, and writers made major contributions to the American comic book industry in the decades following Eastern Color Printing's *Funnies on Parade* of 1933. Examples of rare and historically significant comic books from the CHS's growing Connecticut comic book holdings will be on view along with artifacts and selections from private collections.

"Heroes, Heartthrobs and Horrors" runs from October 19, 2003, to April 25, 2004, Tuesdays through Sundays, noon to 5:00 p.m. For more information about special upcoming comic book events at the CHS Museum, go to *www.chs.org*.



Courtesy CHS

Friend of *Charlton Spotlight* Michael Seher drove down from Massachusetts to attend the exhibit's opening reception and contributed this report for our readers:

Connecticut's Comics Connections

by **Michael Seher**

Around 100 people were on hand for the opening of the Connecticut Historical Society's exhibit "Heroes, Heartthrobs and Horrors" on Sunday afternoon, October 19, 2003, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the CHS Museum in Hartford, CT. You could tell that the day's event was going to be treated as a special and serious one from the start. Comic books are often viewed as kid stuff, disposable, not a serious part of history. HHt&H shows that this just isn't the case by exploring, analyzing and exposing the medium as one that reaches out to readers of various ages, can be enjoyed as much now as it was in the past, and contributes to the artistic and literary portions of our culture.

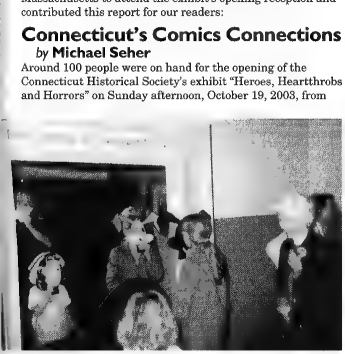


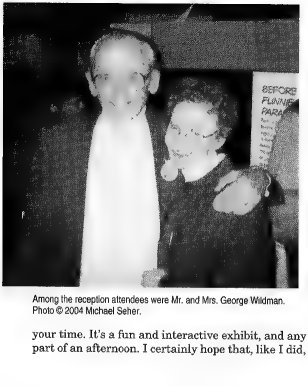
Photo © 2004 Michael Seher

HHt&H is a multimedia event with a multitude of displays to read, actual Golden, Silver and Modern Age comics to see and read, videos to watch, audio playbacks to hear, and other tactile and interactive experiences.

The CHS invites us to "come see how Connecticut invented the comic book" and then runs with it. They make this claim, and rightly so, because *Funnies on Parade,* by Connecticut's own Eastern Color Printing, is widely thought of as the first real comic book. It was the first publication to feature just comics, albeit reprinted comic strips, throughout the entire book. Perhaps the CHS felt that its exhibit would be incomplete without this comic, so they went out, at a significant expense no doubt, and acquired one—which is without a doubt the most expensive, and historical, piece in the entire exhibit.

The exhibit encompasses comics as a living experience, with portions of HHt&H devoted to the genres of comics, how a comic is created/assembled, comics publishers with ties to CT, censorship and the formation of the Comics Code Authority, comics-related merchandise, comics-themed TV shows and movies, and more.

The CHS built up a predominance of its display inventory (comics, books, original art, figures, posters, and more) via eBay. The only piece currently on display in the exhibit not



Among the reception attendees were Mr. and Mrs. George Wildman.
Photo © 2004 Michael Seher.

owned by them is a copy of Charlton's *Space Western* #40 and part of writer Walter Gibson's actual script for that issue, items loaned to them by the *CharSpot* publisher himself.

The chief comics celebrity in attendance was former Charlton executive editor George Wildman, who greeted guests, stood for photographs, and gave out Popeye sketches to the crowd. Also present were at least a couple of ex-employees of various Connecticut printing companies. The outgoing, courteous CHS staff I met at the three-hour reception (Joanne Eudy, James Jensen, Andrew Goldstein, Kate Steinway, and Peter Lisi) were very helpful and willing to answer questions and provided copies of much promotional material. They also readily pointed out how much fun they had in creating HHt&H, how they hoped it would enlighten the public that comics are a serious and significant part of history, and how the whole process was a learning experience for them as well.

Attending HHt&H at the CHS Museum is a spectacular way to spend your time. It's a fun and interactive exhibit, and any comics collector-aficionado-historian will easily get lost there for the better part of an afternoon. I certainly hope that, like I did, you're able to do so during the exhibit's run at the CHS.

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. . . MAILBAG, from page 68

nice to see the whole story collected in one place, along with the story of the "cereal box press," working in the bullpen, etc.

Pat Boyette's work is always great to see. He was a fine cartoonist with a strong style that was both unique and traditional. Many of my comics have been scattered over the years, but I still have his "Children of Doom" for Charlton, and that one's going to remain a classic.

It was interesting to see Joe Shuster's artwork. I'm afraid apart from the early Superman or earlier stuff that's been reprinted, I don't know his art well. It looks so different from his earlier work. Did he really do it? It looks like it might have been ghosted by somebody. I can't quite put my finger on, but at Charlton's low page rates I don't know that he could necessarily hire anybody else. Interesting, too that Shuster was working for Charlton in 1954 and Jerry Siegel worked for them a couple of years later. Does anybody know if they ever worked on the same books while there?

A Jerry Siegel index might be a nice thing too (but beyond my capabilities). I think he was responsible for some of the mid-1950s hero books like *Mr. Muscles, Nature Boy, Za Za the Mystic,* etc, but I'm not sure which ones.

A lot of talent went through that little company, and it's nice to see it being recognized. Charlton produced some classic material. They did a lovely version of the Blue Beetle with new art in a realistic style by Galindo and Oarin, the *Nature Boy* series is a classic early Silver Age hero, and their pre-Code crime and horror get as good (as bad?) as any publishers, and there are many little gems throughout the 50s and 60s. I've met many people over the years who collect their stuff, and I'm still looking for some of the early Capt. Atoms and am very happy to have located a copy of *Mr. Muscles* #23!

—— • ——

Steve Fiorilla
Depew, NY

Thanks for *Charlton Spotlight* #2. I read it from cover to cover! The Charlton horror issues would always tide me over between issues of DC's *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets* (w/ *wild* Wrightson covers!). Hot *damn!!* Those were the days!

—— • ——

Nick Caputo
from the charlton-l discussion list [charlton-l @yahoogroups.com]

I just received the latest *Charlton Spotlight* yesterday, and while I haven't had a chance to read it yet, I wanted everyone to know that it looks like a sensational issue. Attractively designed, with a load of wonderful art and articles. I would urge everyone to get a copy. You won't be sorry. Wonderful job, Mike. I look forward to more (and thanks for the nice plug for my *CBM* article).

I'm sorry to hear the news of Tom's passing. Tom was another vastly underrated artist who was able to bring a unique feel to a variety of genres. I probably first noticed his work on *Not Brand Echh,* doing a great job making fun of the Marvel style. I think he also contributed to quite a few cards and stickers I bought as a kid from Topps. Sutton was also at home in the horror genre, and produced scores of atmospheric stories for Charlton and Warren. I particularly enjoyed some of his painted covers. I felt he was pretty much wasted drawing *Star Trek* for so many years, especially under the heavy handed inks of Ricardo Villagran.

I suspect any artist not associated with a continuing character is somewhat ignored in the mainstream, and that is unfortunate. Sutton was one of those artists whose personality seemed to translate into his work. He produced an impressive body of work over the years, and deserves to be studied, appreciated and enjoyed.

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WE ALSO HEARD FROM . . .

Robin Snyder, Frank D'Urso, Brian Overton, Dan Reed, Daniel Green, Mike Feldman, Andersson Anders, James Romberger, Ric Best, Mike Browning, Ramon Schenk, Link Yaco and many other folks, but we ran out of room to print their letters! Remember, this is *your* magazine, so please let us know what you liked and didn't like about this issue, and who you want us to shine the spotlight on next.

NEXT ISSUE

For starters, we'll have a memorial tribute to **Pete Morisi**, focusing on his long Charlton Comics career. Look for a comprehensive index and cover gallery, among other features. We'll also take a look at a couple of Charlton's magazine efforts, beginning with **Mark Arnold**'s exhaustive survey of **Sick** and continuing with **Denis Tiani**'s personal memoir of Charlton's entries in the monster zine craze of the early 1960s, **Horror Monsters** and **Mad Monsters**. Then **Tom Christopher** shares an account of his brief tenure at Charlton in its latter days. And there'll be much more Charlton historical information as well as still other features we haven't thought of yet! Subscribe now to insure you won't miss **Charlton Spotlight #4**; see ordering information at the bottom of page 64.

Charlton Comics Checklist: Year by Year *Part 2:* 1955–1958

Compiled by Dan Stevenson, with assistance from Mike Tiefenbacher; edited by Michael Ambrose • © 2004 Dan Stevenson • All cover images © Charlton Comics Group

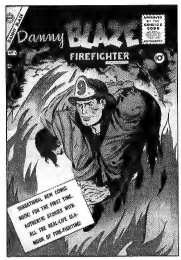
Year, Titles, Issues Published, and Total Number of Comics Published per Year

1955

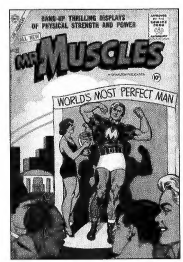
Atomic Mouse 11 (12-1/54-55) — 16 (12/55) 6
Atomic Rabbit 1 (8/55) — 2 (10/55) 2
Badge of Justice 22 (1/55) — 23 (3/55); 1 (4/55) — 4 (10/55) 3
Black Fury 1 (5/55) — 3 (9/55) 3
Blue Beetle 18 (2/55) — 21 (8/55) 4
Bo 1 (6/55) — 3 (10/55) 3
Brenda Starr 13 (6/55) — 15 (10/55) 3
Bulls-Eye 6 (6/55) — 7 (8/55) 2
Charlie Chan 6 (6/55) — 8 (10/55) 3
Cody of the Pony Express 8 (10/55) 1
Cowboy Love 28 (2/55) — 31 (8/55) 4
Cowboy Western 53 (2/55) — 57 (10/55) 5
Crime and Justice 22 (7/55) [exist?] — 26 (9/55) 5
Danger 12 (6/55) — 14 (10/55) 3
Danger and Adventure 22 (2/55) — 26 (11/55) 5
Danny Blaze 1 (8/55) — 2 (10/55) 2
Davy Crockett 1 (8/55) — 4 (12/55) 4
Death Valley 7 (6/55) — 9 (10/55) 3
Don Winslow of the Navy 70 (3/55) — 73 (9/55) 4
Fightin' Marines 14 (5/55) — 16 (9/55) 3
Foreign Intrigues 13 (7/55) [exist?] 1
Foxhole 5 (7/55) — 6 (9/55) 2
Frank Merriwell at Yale 1 (6/55) — 3 (10/55) 3
From Here to Insanity 8 (7/55) — 11 (8/55) 4
Funny Animals 88 (1/55) — 90 (4/55) 3
Gabby Hayes Western 52 (2/55) — 56 (11/55) 5
Hillbilly Comics 1 (8/55) — 2 (10/55) 2
Hot Rods and Racing Cars 20 (1/55) — 25 (11/55) 6
I Love You 7 (9/55) — 8 (12/55) 2
In Love 5 (5/55) — 6 (7/55) 2
Johnny Ramaine 10 (6/55) — 12 (10/55) 3
Lash LaRue Western 53 (2/55) — 58 (11/55) 6
Li'l Genius 6 (7/55) — 7 (9/55) [#2-5 exist?] 2+
Masked Raider, The 1 (6/55) — 3 (10/55) 3
Monte Hale Western 83 (2/55) — 87 (10/55) 5
My Little Margie 5 (1/55) — 9 (9/55) 5
My Little Margie's Boyfriends 1 (8/55) — 2 (10/55) 2
Negro Romance 4 (5/55) 1
Never Again 1 (8/55) — 2 (?/55) [#2 exist?] 2
Nyoka, the Jungle Girl 14 (11/55) 1
Police Trap 5 (7/55) — 6 (9/55) 2
Racket Squad in Action 14 (1/55) — 19 (11/55) 6
Ramar of the Jungle 2 (9/55) 1
Range Busters 8 (5/55) — 10 (9/55) 3
Rocky Lane Western 65 (1/55) — 69 (9/55) 5
Romantic Secrets 5 (10/55) 1
Romantic Story 28 (8/55) — 29 (10/55) 2
Rookie Cop 27 (11/55) 1
Scotland Yard 1 (6/55) — 3 (10/55) 3
Sherlock Holmes 1 (10/55) 1
Six-Gun Heroes 32 (2/55) — 36 (10/55) 5
Soldier and Marine Comics 12 (2/55) — 15 (8/55) 4
Space Adventures 14 (1/55) — 19 (12/55) 6
Strange Suspense Stories 27 (10/55) 1
Sweetheart Diary 32 (10/55) 1
Sweethearts 28 (2/55) — 32 (10/55) 5
Terry and the Pirates 26 (6/55) — 28 (10/55) 3
Tex Ritter Western 27 (2/55) — 31 (10/55) 5
This Is Suspense 23 (2/55) — 26 (8/55) 4
True Life Secrets 24 (1/55) — 28 (9/55) 5
TV Teens 6 (1/55) — 10 (11/55) 5
Unusual Tales 1 (11/55) 1
Wild Frontier 1 (10/55) — 2 (12/55) 2
Win-a-Prize Comics 1 (2/55) — 2 (4/55) 2
Zoo Funnies 9 (1/55) — 13 (9/55) 5
210+

1956

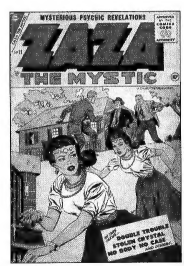
Atomic Mouse 17 (3/56) — 20 (12/56) 4
Atomic Rabbit 3 (2/56) — 5 (10/56) 3
Black Fury 4 (1/56) — 7 (12/56) 4
Brides in Love 1 (8/56) 1
Captain Gallant 2 (1/56) — 4 (9/56) 3
Charlie Chan 9 (3/56) 1
Cody of the Pony Express 9 (1/56) — 10 (6/56) 2
Cowboy Western 58 (1/56) — 61 (10/56) 4
Danger and Adventure 27 (2/56) 1
Davy Crockett 5 (3/56) — 7 (8/56) 3
Fightin' Air Force 3 (2/56) — 5 (11/56) 3
Fightin' Army 16 (1/56) — 18 (9/56) 3
Fightin' Marines 17 (1/56) — 19 (9/56) 3
Fightin' Navy 74 (1/56) — 76 (9/56) 3
Foreign Intrigues 14 (3/56) — 15 (8/56) 2
Foxhole 7 (3/56) 1
Frank Merriwell at Yale 4 (1/56) 1
Frontier Scout, Dan'l Boone 10 (1/56) — 13 (8/56) 4
Funny Animals 91 (2/56) 1
Gabby Hayes Western 57 (2/56) — 58 (6/56) 2
Hillbilly Comics 3 (1/56) — 4 (7/56) 2
Hot Rods and Racing Cars 26 (3/56) — 28 (8/56) 3
I Love You 9 (3/56) — 11 (8/56) 3
Jim Bowie 6 (1/56) — 16 (3/56) — 17 (8/56) [#15 exist?] 3
Lash LaRue Western 59 (3/56) — 62 (12/56) 4
Li'l Genius 8 (1/56) — 11 (10/56) 4
Li'l Tomboy 92 (10/56) 1
Long John Silver and the Pirates 30 (8/56) — 31 (12/56) 2
Masked Raider, The 4 (4/56) — 5 (8/56) 2
Mr. Muscles 22 (3/56) — 23 (8/56) 2
Monte Hale Western 88 (1/56) 1
My Little Margie 10 (1/56) — 13 (8/56) 4
My Little Margie's Boyfriends 3 (2/56) — 5 (12/56) 3
Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds 1 (8/56) 1
Nature Boy 3 (3/56) — 4 (8/56) 2
Never Again 8 (7/56) 1
Nyoka, the Jungle Girl 15 (1/56) — 18 (9/56) 4
Out of this World 1 (8/56) — 2 (12/56) 2
Public Defender in Action 7 (3/56) — 9 (12/56) 3
Racket Squad in Action 20 (2/56) — 23 (9/56) 4
Ramar of the Jungle 3 (1/56) — 5 (9/56) 3
Robin Hood and His Merry Men 28 (4/56) — 30 (9/56) 3
Rocky Lane Western 70 (1/56) — 73 (8/56) 4
Romantic Secrets 6 (2/56) — 9 (12/56) 4
Romantic Story 30 (1/56) — 33 (8/56) 4
Rookie Cop 28 (3/56) — 30 (8/56) 3
Scotland Yard 4 (3/56) 1
Secrets of Love and Marriage 1 (8/56) 1
Sherlock Holmes 2 (3/56) 1
Six-Gun Heroes 37 (2/56) — 39 (8/56) 3
Soldier and Marine Comics 9 (12/56) 1
Space Adventures 20 (3/56) — 21 (8/56) 2
Strange Suspense Stories 28 (2/56) — 30 (8/56) 3
Sweetheart Diary 33 (4/56) — 35 (9/56) 3
Sweethearts 33 (2/56) — 36 (9/56) 4
Tales of the Mysterious Traveler 1 (8/56) 1
Texas Rangers in Action 5 (7/56) 1
Tex Ritter Western 32 (2/56) — 34 (11/56) 3
Timmy, the Timid Ghost 2 (2/56) — 5 (11/56) 3
Tom Cat 4 (4/56) — 5 (8/56) 2
True Life Secrets 29 (1/56) 1
TV Teens 11 (1/56) — 13 (7/56) 3
Unusual Tales 2 (1/56) — 5 (9/56) 4
Wild Frontier 3 (3/56) — 5 (8/56) 3
Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshall 12 (1/56) — 14 (9/56) 3
Young Eagle 3 (7/56) 1
Young Lovers 16 (7/56) — 17 (12/56) 2
Za Za the Mystic 10 (4/56) — 11 (9/56) 2
169



Danny Blaze #1, Aug. 1955



Mr. Muscles #22, Mar. 1956



Za Za the Mystic #11, Sept. 1956

1957

Atomic House 21 (3/57) — 24 (11/57) 4
Atomic Rabbit 6 (2/57) — 9 (11/57) 4
Atom the Cat 9 (10/57) — 10 (12/57) 2
Battlefield Action 16 (11/57) — 17 (12/57) 2
Billy the Kid 9 (11/57) — 10 (12/57) 2
Black Fury 8 (3/57) — 11 (11/57) 4
Brides in Love 2 (1/57) — 6 (12/57) 5
Cheyenne Kid 8 (7/57) — 10 (12/57) 3
Cowboy Western 62 (2/57) — 65 (11/57) 4
Davy Crockett 8 (1/57) 1
Fightin' Air Force 6 (3/57) — 9 (11/57) 4
Fightin' Army 19 (2/57) — 23 (12/57) 5
Fightin' Marines 20 (2/57) — 24 (12/57) 5
Fightin' Navy 77 (2/57) — 80 (11/57) 4
First Kiss 1 (12/57) 1
Gabby Hayes Western 59 (1/57) 1
Giant Comics 1 (Sum 57) — 3 (Win 57) 3
Hot Rods and Racing Cars 29 (1/57) — 33 (11/57) 5
Humbug 1 (8/57) — 5 (12/57) 5
I Love You 12 (1/57) — 16 (12/57) 5
Intimate 1 (12/57) 1
Jerry Drummer 10 (4/57) — 12 (10/57) 3
Jim Bowie 18 (1/57) — 19 (4/57) 2
Kid Montana 9 (11/57) — 10 (12/57) 2
Lash LaRue Western 63 (3/57) — 66 (11/57) 4
Li'l Genius 12 (3/57) — 15 (11/57) 4
Li'l Rascal Twins 6 (9/57) — 7 (11/57) 2
Li'l Tomboy 93 (3/57) — 96 (11/57) 4
Long John Silver and the Pirates 32 (3/57) 1
Masked Raider, The 6 (2/57) — 8 (7/57) 3
My Little Margie 14 (1/57) — 18 (12/57) 5
My Little Margie's Boyfriends 6 (3/57) — 9 (11/57) 4
My Secret Life 19 (8/57) — 21 (12/57) 3
Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds 2 (1/57) — 6 (12/57) 5
Nature Boy 5 (2/57) 1
Nyoka, the Jungle Girl 19 (2/57) — 22 (11/57) 4
Outlaws of the West 11 (7/57) — 13 (12/57) 3
Out of this World 3 (3/57) — 6 (11/57) 4
Public Defender in Action 10 (4/57) — 12 (10/57) 3
Racket Squad in Action 24 (2/57) — 27 (11/57) 4
Robin Hood and His Merry Men 31 (2/57) — 34 (11/57) 4
Rock and Rollo 14 (10/57) — 15 (12/57) 2
Rocky Lane's Black Jack 20 (11/57) 1
Rocky Lane Western 74 (1/57) — 78 (12/57) 5
Romantic Secrets 10 (3/57) — 13 (11/57) 4
Romantic Story 34 (2/57) — 37 (11/57) 4
Ronkie Gal 31 (2/57) — 32 (8/57) 3
Secrets of Love and Marriage 2 (2/57) — 6 (11/57) 5
Secrets of Young Brides 5 (9/57) — 6 (11/57) 2
Six-Gun Heroes 40 (2/57) — 44 (12/57) 5
Speed Demons 5 (2/57) — 8 (11/57) 4
Strange Suspense Stories 31 (2/57) — 35 (12/57) 5
Sweetheart Diary 36 (2/57) — 39 (11/57) 4
Sweethearts 37 (2/57) — 40 (11/57) 4
Tales of the Mysterious Traveler 2 (2/57) — 6 (12/57) 5
Texas Rangers in Action 6 (1/57) — 10 (11/57) 5
Tex Ritter Western 35 (3/57) — 38 (11/57) 4
This Magazine Is Haunted 12 (7/57) — 14 (12/57) 3
Timmy, the Timid Ghost 6 (3/57) — 9 (11/57) 4
Tom Cat 6 (2/57) — 8 (7/57) 3
Unusual Tales 6 (2/57) — 9 (11/57) 4
War at Sea 22 (11/57) — 23 (12/57) 2
Wild Frontier 6 (1/57) — 7 (4/57) 2
Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshall 15 (2/57) — 18 (11/57) 4
Young Eagle 4 (1/57) — 5 (4/57) 2
Young Lovers 18 (5/57) 1

1958

Atomic Bunny 12 (8/58) — 14 (12/58) 3
Atomic House 25 (2/58) — 28 (11/58) 4
Atomic Rabbit 10 (1/58) — 11 (3/58) 2
Atom the Cat 11 (2/58) — 13 (10/58) 3
Attack 54 (1958) — 55 (12/58) 2
Battlefield Action 18 (3/58) — 22 (12/58) 5
Billy the Kid 11 (2/58) — 14 (11/58) 4
Black Fury 12 (2/58) — 16 (11/58) 5
Brides in Love 7 (2/58) — 10 (11/58) 4
Cheyenne Kid 11 (2/58) — 14 (11/58) 4
Cowboy Western 66 (1/58) — 67 (3/58) 2
Fightin' Air Force 10 (1/58) — 13 (12/58) 4
Fightin' Army 24 (5/58) — 27 (11/58) 4
Fightin' Marines 25 (3/58) — 27 (11/58) 3
Fightin' Navy 81 (1/58) — 84 (11/58) 4
First Kiss 2 (2/58) — 6 (11/58) 5
Freddy 12 (6/58) — 14 (11/58) 3
Hot Rods and Racing Cars 34 (2/58) — 37 (10/58) 4
Humbug 6 (1/58) — 9 (5/58) 4
I Love You 17 (2/58) — 20 (10/58) 4
Intimate 2 (2/58) — 3 (5/58) 2
Just Married 1 (1/58) — 5 (10/58) 5
Kid Montana 11 (2/58) — 15 (11/58) 5
Lash LaRue Western 67 (2/58) — 70 (12/58) 4
Li'l Genius 16 (1/58) — 19 (12/58) 4
Li'l Rascal Twins 8 (1/58) — 12 (11/58) 5
Li'l Tomboy 97 (1/58) — 101 (10/58) 5
Love Diary 1 (10/58) — 2 (12/58) 2
Masked Raider, The 14 (8/58) — 16 (12/58) 3
Maverick Marshall 1 (11/58) 1
My Little Margie 19 (2/58) — 22 (12/58) 4
My Little Margie's Boyfriends 10 (1/58) — 11 (4/58) 2
My Secret Life 22 (3/58) — 26 (12/58) 5
Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds 7 (2/58) — 10 (11/58) 4
Outer Space 17 (5/58) — 20 (12/58) 4
Outlaws of the West 14 (2/58) — 17 (11/58) 4
Out of this World 7 (2/58) — 10 (10/58) 4
Pudgy Pig 1 (9/58) — 2 (11/58) 2
Racket Squad in Action 28 (1/58) — 29 (3/58) 2
Robin Hood and His Merry Men 35 (1/58) — 38 (8/58) 4
Rock and Rollo 16 (2/58) — 19 (9/58) 4
Rocky Lane's Black Jack 21 (1/58) — 25 (12/58) 5
Rocky Lane Western 79 (Fall 58) — 82 (11/58) 4
Romantic Secrets 14 (1/58) — 18 (10/58) 5
Romantic Story 38 (1/58) — 41 (12/58) 4
Santa's Tinker Tots 1 (1958) 1
Secrets of Love and Marriage 7 (2/58) — 10 (10/58) 4
Secrets of Young Brides 7 (2/58) — 11 (11/58) 5
Sheriff of Tombstone 1 (11/58) 1
Six-Gun Heroes 45 (3/58) — 49 (12/58) 5
Space Adventures 23 (5/58) — 26 (12/58) 4
Speed Demons 9 (1/58) — 10 (5/58) 2
Strange Suspense Stories 36 (3/58) — 39 (11/58) 4
Submarine Attack 11 (5/58) — 14 (12/58) 4
Sweetheart Diary 40 (1/58) — 44 (12/58) 5
Sweethearts 41 (1/58) — 46 (12/58) 6
Tales of the Mysterious Traveler 7 (3/58) — 10 (11/58) 4
Teen-Age Love 4 (7/58) — 6 (11/58) 3
Texas Rangers in Action 11 (2/58) — 14 (12/58) 4
Tex Ritter Western 39 (1/58) — 43 (10/58) 5
This Magazine Is Haunted 15 (2/58) — 16 (5/58) 2
Timmy, the Timid Ghost 10 (1/58) — 12 (10/58) 3
Unusual Tales 10 (1/58) — 14 (12/58) 4
U.S. Air Force Comics 1 (10/58) 1
War at Sea 24 (3/58) — 28 (12/58) 5
Wild Bill Hickock and Jingles 68 (8/58) — 70 (12/58) 3
Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshall 19 (1/58) — 22 (11/58) 4

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COMIC-TYPE MAGAZINES, 1955-1958

Crazy v3#3 (11/57); v4#7 (12/58) 2
222 Crazy, Man, Crazy 2 (6/56) 1
From Here to Insanity 12 (10/55) [B&W, comic-sized] 1
From Here to Insanity v3#1 (4/57) 1
Humbug 10 (6/58) — 11 (10/58) 2
This Magazine Is Crazy v3#2 (7/57), v3#4 (7/58); v4#5 (6/58) — v4#6 (9/58) 4

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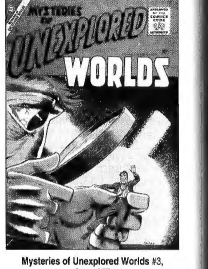
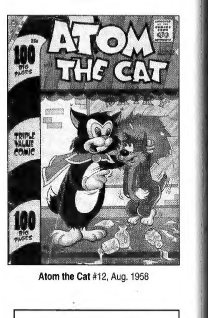


Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds #3, Apr. 1957



Atom the Cat #12, Aug. 1958

The **year-by-year checklist** of Charlton comics is provided through the courtesy of Dan Stevenson, who has personally seen 99.5% of the books. Mike Tiefenbacher was also a major source of the data. In future issues we will continue the series and compile expanded versions of this checklist, including prior/subsequent title and refined month/year data as this information becomes organized. The ultimate goal is a complete index of all Charlton comics. Your input is not only desirable but essential! Please send any comments and corrections c/o this magazine. In the meantime, remember: ***Charlton Comics Give You More!***

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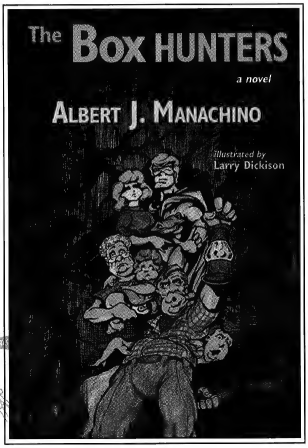
Who were all these people?



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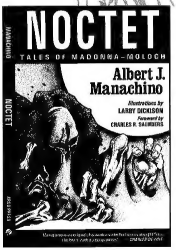

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Tom Sutton: *The Many Ghosts of Doctor Graves* #50, March 1975 © Charlton Comics Group